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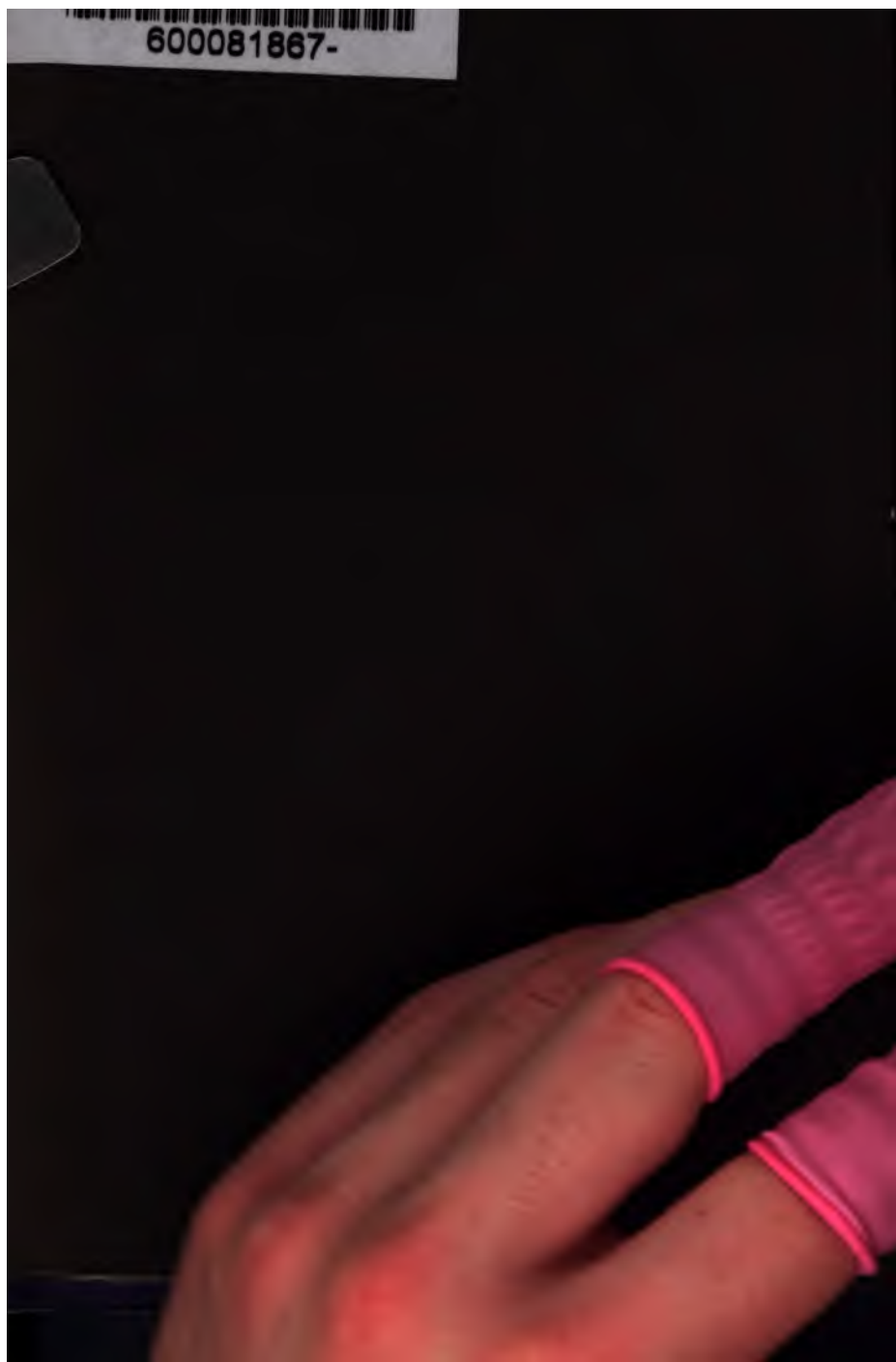
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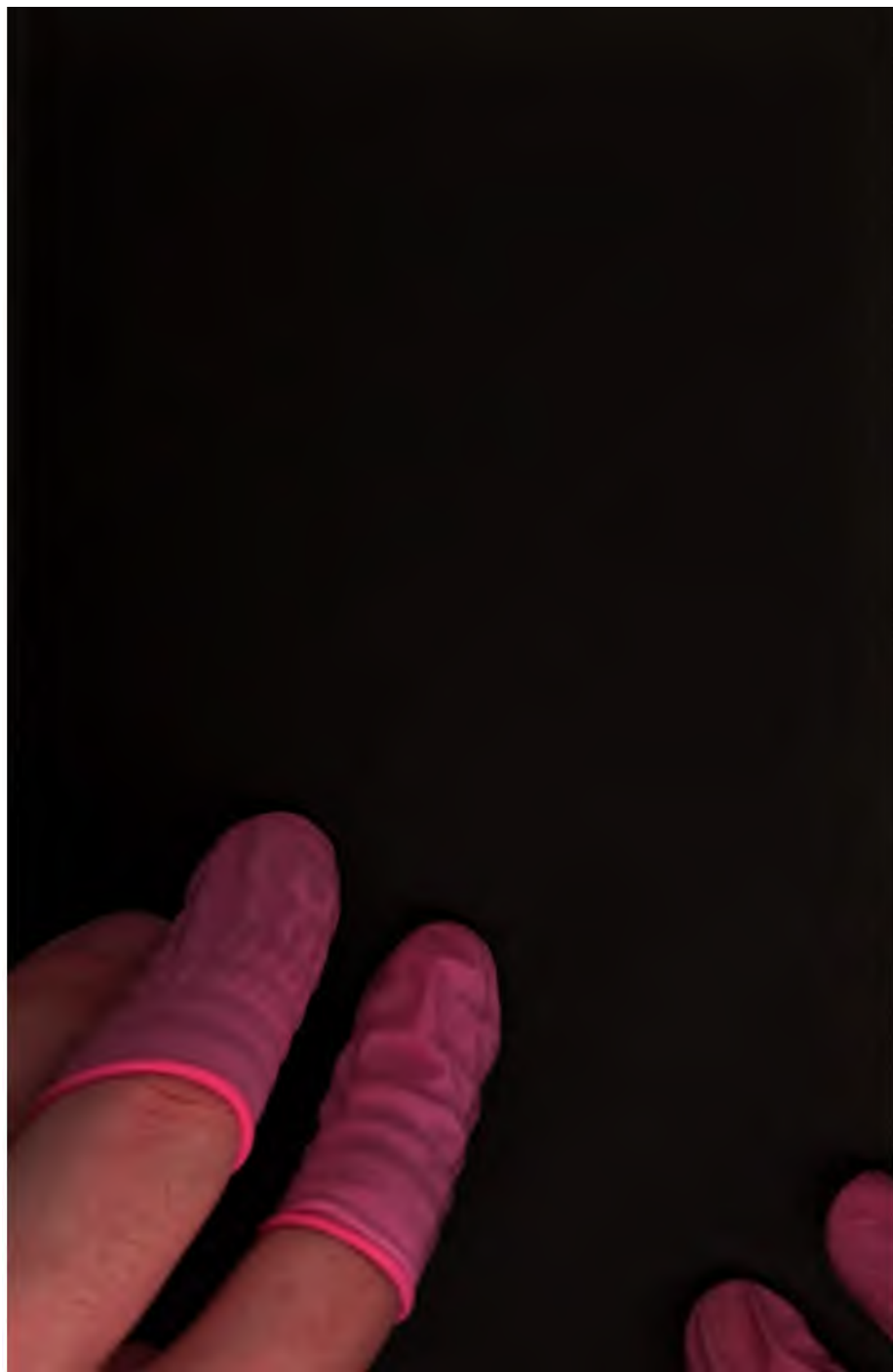
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COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS

OR

LONDON UNDER THE FIRST GEORGES

1714—1760

BY

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
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1882.

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TO

ANDREW COMMINS, Esq.,

B.L., LL.D., M.P.,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

IN the following pages an attempt is made to give a reliable and, it is to be hoped, interesting picture of the manners, habits, and morals of the English Court under the reign of the two first Georges, and of the society—brilliant, witty, remarkable—which revolved around and too faithfully followed these royal models. As far as possible, the dry and already well-known facts of the politics of this period have been omitted, and are only referred

to in cases where they have direct bearing on the personages and scenes described.

No incident has been mentioned, no statement made, without authority, though as much as possible the reader has been spared the ungrateful task of conning notes and references; and where it has been found admissible, descriptions are given in the language of the original narrators or of eye-witnesses.

Much pains have been taken to give the characteristics of every prominent personage as faithfully as possible; and for this purpose I have searched at length, not only through the biographies and works of the period, but likewise through the newspapers, pamphlets, ballad-literature, and that mine of treasures to be found in the manuscript diaries and correspondence of the era, preserved in the library of the

British Museum, which contain most valuable, reliable, and, so far as I am aware, hitherto unused information.

I have to acknowledge with gratitude the extreme courtesy and ready assistance afforded me in my researches by Mr. Richard Garnet and Mr. Anderson of the British Museum Library; and, finally, to hope that what has been to me a 'love's labour' may not, through want of public interest, be 'lost.'

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

London, 1882.

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DURING the last days of July, 1714, Queen Anne of blessed memory lay dying in Kensington Palace. These were troubled times in England, for the ministry and the nation were alike divided in opinion as to whether James Stuart, called the Pretender, or George Lewis Guelph, the Elector of Hanover, should sit upon

the British throne. Now Queen Anne hated the House of Hanover, and, though secretly desiring the restoration of her brother, yet she was too staunch a Protestant and too timid a woman to openly aid him by any decisive act; and a like hesitation, begotten of her example, actuating the Stuart adherents, the nation looked forward to ominous times and prepared for civil war.

But a month before the good queen had offered the respectable sum of five thousand pounds for her brother's 'apprehension, dead or alive, if he were found in Great Britain or Ireland.' Now, however, when death drew near, some feeling of remorse seemed to have touched her, and she lay writhing in mental and physical pain, calling out, 'Oh, my brother, what will become of you? Oh, my poor brother!' Cabinet councils were held in the ante-room almost within ear-shot of Her Majesty, where some stormy scenes were enacted; agitated crowds gathered in the streets; the lovers of peace prayed for her recovery at the daily services at St. Paul's; and in the City, stocks rose at the rumours of her death and fell again at those of her recovery. Still she lingered, and the

Privy Council sat night and day waiting for her death. When at last she became insensible, it assembled in the royal bed-chamber, crowded with grave physicians, weeping women, and disconsolate favourites. The queen lay deaf and blind to all that went on around her; all hope that her life would be prolonged was now at an end, and trusty Secretary Craggs was despatched to Hanover with the tidings that Her Majesty was dying, and that all things were in readiness for the accession of the Elector, George Lewis Guelph.

In a small chamber opening off the queen's, three gentlemen, all true Tories and staunch Jacobites—to wit, Lord Marischal, the Duke of Ormond, Captain-General of the army, and my Lord Bishop Atterbury—held secret council. Lord Marischal and the bishop, who saw that the cause they espoused was in great danger, sought to make the duke go boldly forward and proclaim James Stuart King of England; but His Grace of Ormond lacked courage, and proposed that they should first consult the council, to which proposal my Lord Bishop replied stoutly, ‘Damn it, you know very well that

things have not been concerted enough for that yet, and that we have not a moment to lose.'

The moment however was lost, the upholders of the Stuart cause made no movement. On Sunday morning, August 1st., Lady Masham, once waiting-maid, now peeress, announced that the queen was dead, and the tolling of the bell of St. Paul's proclaimed the fact to the silent and expectant throngs that filled the streets.

Two messengers were sent from England to Hanover with the news of Her Majesty's death, the one to the new king, the other to the Earl of Clarendon, English Envoy Extraordinary. When the courier despatched to the noble earl arrived in hot haste at his destination, he found that my Lord Clarendon was enjoying himself at a little supper given by a lady who had a reputation for two excellent things in their way—beauty and pleasure. My lord was immediately sent for, and on arriving home saw the courier, who handed him the despatches announcing the important news, and bidding him recognize George Lewis, Elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Hanover, as his king; whereon the earl, whose temper was not improved at being rudely

called away from his supper, and, moreover, at learning that the Stuart house, of which he was a kinsman, had seemingly lost all chances of restoration which its adherents had hoped for, got back into his coach and drove with all speed to Herrnhausen, where His Electoral Highness was comfortably snoring in bed, all unconscious of the new honours which had suddenly fallen upon him.

However, the Envoy Extraordinary dared on this occasion to disturb His Highness's sacred slumbers just as, thirteen years afterwards, Sir Robert Walpole ventured to rouse the Prince of Wales from his afternoon nap for the purpose of conveying a like intelligence. My Lord Clarendon entered the Elector's bed-chamber at two o'clock in the morning, and, falling upon his knees on the floor, told him, as Baron Pollnitz informs us, that 'so great a diadem was fallen to him;' after hearing which George Lewis turned on his side, and slept soundly until the next morning.

The following day brought the Earl of Dorset to the Court of Hanover, who announced to the new king that the English nation waited with

impatience to place the crown of Great Britain, France, and Ireland on his head; and to inform him that his accession had been received, and his title proclaimed, with an unusual appearance of joy and satisfaction; which statements, though not quite true, probably sounded well to the little Elector who had suddenly become, in the words of his English subjects, 'A high and mighty prince.'

It will always remain an historical doubt if George Lewis seriously cared for the royal honours thrust upon him. He had passed his fiftieth year; he had acquired settled habits, which the duties of his new dignity, taking him among a people of whom he knew little, would necessarily interfere with: moreover, he had been very comfortable in his native Hanover, which he always preferred to England, or indeed to any other spot on the globe. He was surrounded by a court which was no better than it should have been, and by a people who had learned to care for him, notwithstanding that he levied heavy taxes on them, took little trouble to aid or elevate them, and was not disinclined to play the despot when opportunity

offered. He was a dull man and a lover of peace, and, in his native city, his days passed by in placid monotony. He held a 'drawing-room' daily at his court, which was numerously attended in obedience to his desires; his palace was capable of accommodating a much larger number of courtiers than St. James's; his opera house was much finer than that of Vienna; persons of distinction from other courts and countries frequently passed through Hanover, and stayed to pay him their respects; he had a company of French comedians to amuse him, and a seraglio of fat and ugly women; he knew nothing of the cares and responsibilities of a great state, and, altogether, his electoral city unto him a kingdom was.

Nature had given him but little ambition, and that little his love of ease and sensuality had completely destroyed. In early life he had done some soldiering, had killed some dozens of Turks, and fought under King William at Steenkerke and Landen; but on the death of his father he had returned to paths of peace, drank, slept, and gambled a great deal, and passed most of his time among the daughters

of his nation, who have been described as having, 'literally, rosy cheeks, snowy foreheads and necks, jet eyebrows; to which may be added coal-black hair, all of which had a very fine effect, especially by candle light.'

His election as king was solely founded on the choice of the majority of Parliament; the reason for which was because he professed the Protestant religion. Admitting the male line of the House of Stuart to have ended in James II., the 'right of blood' rested in the House of Savoy, through Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, daughter of Charles I. So that more than fifty persons, whose claims were nearer than that of the Elector, were quietly passed over. His mother, the clever Sophia, Electress of Hanover, was the youngest daughter of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, sister of Charles I., and granddaughter of James I., of England. Had Sophia survived Queen Anne, she would have been the first of the Hanoverian line to reign over England. At one period of her life she was a thorough Jacobite, and, during her cousin James's exile in St. Germain, kept up a secret correspondence with him. However, when her

chance of succession became apparent, she, with remarkable rapidity, changed her mind.

When the act of settling the succession on her and her house had passed, the good Lords Halifax and Dorset were sent to convey the news to the Electress. A day was appointed for the formal announcement, and Sophia received the peers with great ceremony. After delivering their credentials, the set speech was commenced announcing the high honour falling to her, when Sophia gave a start, and getting up, ran to a corner of the room, fixed her back against the wall, and stood there erect and stiff until the audience ended. My lords were too good courtiers to appear surprised at such a seeming piece of eccentricity, but were human enough to betray some curiosity afterwards, when they learned from one of the electoral household that Sophia had started on catching sight of a picture of the Pretender, and had run across the room and stood before it in order to hide this counterfeit presentment of her kinsman, lest they should see and feel offended by its presence. Poor soul! she never lived to have her ambition gratified, as she died about six weeks before

Queen Anne. 'I could die happy,' she used to say, 'if I could only live to have engraven upon my coffin the words: "Here lies Sophia, Queen of England."' "

It was due to her influence that her son looked forward to his ultimate succession, but, she being removed, his indifference became perceptible. It has been stated that, if any signs of disfavour had been made at his proclamation, George I. would never have taken the English sceptre in his hands, but would have stayed comfortably at home to eat, drink, and make merry as usual, and not bother his head about Parliaments and peoples that were strange to him; but no such signs were made, and the English throne was lost to the Stuarts for ever. 'The late king, I am fully persuaded,' says Dean Lockier, after the death of George Lewis, 'would never have stirred a foot if there had been any strong opposition; indeed, the family did not expect this crown; at least, nobody in it but the late Princess Sophia.' In a letter written by Marshal Schulenberg to Baron Steinghaus a few days before the queen's death, he gives a clear testimony to the king's feelings on the subject in these words: 'It is quite evident that George

is profoundly indifferent to the result of this question of the succession. Nay, I would even bet that when it really comes to the point he will be in despair at having to give up his place of residence, where he amuses himself with trifles, in order to assume a post of honour and dignity. He is endowed with all the qualities adapted to make him a finished nobleman, but he wants all those that are necessary to constitute a king.'

That remarkable woman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was one of the attractions of the first George's court, gives her opinion of the king, whom she had many opportunities of studying, in this graphic sentence: 'He was more properly dull than lazy, and would have been so well contented to have remained in his little town of Hanover that, if the ambition of those about him had not been greater than his own, we should never have seen him in England; and the natural honesty of his temper, joined with the narrow notions of a low education, made him look upon his acceptance of the crown as an act of usurpation which was always uneasy to him.'

After a month's delay the new king, almost.

unwillingly, left his beloved Hanover with tears in his eyes, accompanied by his mistresses, having left the comforting assurance to his subjects that it would not be long before he visited them again. With such evidence as already mentioned of his reluctance to visit his new kingdom it cannot be wondered that he received the addresses of Parliament with a calmness truly Teutonic, which at the same time surprised my good Lord Dorset. That of his most dutiful and loyal subjects, the lords temporal and spiritual in Parliament assembled, assured His Majesty that with thankful hearts to Almighty God they congratulated him on his peaceful and happy accession to the English throne, that with all their zeal and affection they would maintain the dignity of his crown, and with thankful hearts they besought His Majesty to give them the favour of his royal presence speedily, which they were persuaded, good, trusting, faithful lords that they were, 'would be attended with all other blessings.'

The address from the House of Commons followed suit, and, if George Lewis understood a word of it, he must have been vastly

amused—for he was a man who enjoyed a good joke—when he was assured ‘His Majesty’s princely virtues gave them a certain prospect of future happiness.’

Without signs of joy or elation, he had prepared to visit the people who were represented as giving utterance to these endearing terms; but the solemn coolness he preserved did duty for majestic serenity. Meanwhile, the Regency had the pleasure of announcing to the people ‘that His Majesty was hastening over to employ his utmost care for putting these kingdoms into a happy and flourishing condition.’

And so it happened that the royal yachts and a squadron of men-of-war were sent to Holland to convey the king to his people. His Majesty, and a numerous suite of Germans, embarked on board the yacht *Peregrin*, that, by the help of an east wind,—which some wag afterwards said was never favourable to the English people—was wafted to Albion’s shore. The king was met at Gravesend by a thick English fog, which not only prevented his landing, but denied him the sight of his new kingdom. The yacht moved slowly up to Greenwich, where he landed,

and where the lords, spiritual and temporal, came in great force, and knelt down and kissed the right royal hand of His Sacred Majesty, who had been wretchedly sea-sick during the voyage, and whose temper and appearance had by no means been improved by the malady. Here came the loyal citizens likewise, trooping in large crowds from London; all anxious to see their future king, and to exercise their vocal powers in shouting huzzas. Cannon thundered, bells clanged, crowds cheered as the monarch landed, but in the midst of the excitement he remained calm and self-possessed as a German, or a sphinx, wishing that these good people who shouted at him would go their ways, and leave a poor old man, who had done nothing in the world to cause such enthusiasm, in peace.

But the good people would not go their ways just then, and when they did, after shouting themselves hoarse, they repaired to the 'Ship Tavern,' where a right royal subject, rejoicing in the name of Thomas Sweetapple, had given notice in the press some weeks before that, 'On the night His Majesty King George arrives, I will give to all loyal subjects a hogs-

head of the best French claret to drink His Majesty's and the royal family's health, at the dock on the back side of the said "Ship Tavern," at eight o'clock precisely. Where also will be a bonfire, all sorts of musick, &c.'

His Majesty had landed on Saturday, and the next day the good citizens came down to Greenwich in still greater numbers to inspect their king. An old newspaper informs us, 'There was an infinite crowd of spectators at Greenwich to see His Majesty and the prince, who were pleased to expose themselves for some time at the windows of their palace, to satisfy the impatient curiosity of his loving subjects.'

It may seem somewhat singular that the first honour these loving subjects sought to confer on George Lewis was that of electing him a churchwarden. Yet we have it on the authority of the *London Magazine* for September, 1787, that 'George I., when landing at Greenwich, was elected churchwarden. It became a matter of dispute whether a king could be a churchwarden, and it was debated in the Privy Council for two months. The Archbishop of Canterbury declared, "he cannot be both," but that he can

take his choice, and his crown again after he had served.'

Meanwhile, the City prepared to receive its king, who was to enter in great pomp and state. No voice was raised against him, who had been styled, 'The saviour of his people.' The earl marshal issued his orders for the direction of the procession; concerning which the following curious advertisement appeared in the *Flying Post* :—

'Whereas, pursuant to an advertisement in last Thursday's *Flying Post*, several senior gentlemen, with their own natural white and grey hairs, resolves to dó themselves the honour to ride in a body before King George on white steeds when His Majesty makes his glorious entry through this honourable city. These are to give notice to all gentlemen either in town or country, whose hairs are of the same complexion, and who are desirous to attend in the same body, that they furnish themselves with white horses and white camlet cloaks; and, as for those who have none of their own, 'tis not doubted but other loyal gentlemen, though not qualified by the colour of their hair to ride in

the venerable body, will so far favour the design as to send their white horses and cloaks to the landlords of the following inns, who will be careful to return them safe and to pay the horse hire.

‘NOTE.—That such senior gentlemen now in town, so qualified and disposed for the appearance, are desired to meet next Friday at Lloyd’s, which was formerly Read’s coffee house, within Ludgate, in order to concert the best methods for managing the affair. God save the King.’

On Monday, September 20th, 1714, the king made his entrance into London. As early as two o’clock on that September afternoon, which had all the brightness of a summer’s day, the royal procession set out from under the broad boughs of the trees in old Greenwich Park, headed by four of the knights marshal’s men on horseback, who were followed by the coaches of esquires, no coach with less than six spanking horses, each one looking as proud as Punch at being permitted to join in the show. Then came the coaches of the knights bachelors with their red and yellow panels, the latter colour, in compliment to the king, being the

prevailing hue of the day ; these coaches were followed by the king's solicitor and the king's attorney, looking very solemn, and learned, and wise, as befitted their offices and the occasion ; after them the baronets and the younger sons of barons and the younger sons of viscounts, all *point de vice* and looking mighty smart in their periwigs and bright coloured velvet coats, with their handsome swords ready to jump out of their sheaths at a moment's notice to defend their own or the king's honour, or the honour or circumstance of any person that would give them an opportunity of running each other or anyone else through the body in a neat man-of-quality-like fashion. These same young gentlemen were followed by the grave Barons of the Exchequer, the learned justices of both benches, the Lord Chief Justice, the Master of the Rolls, the Privy Councillors, all grave men and worthy, without doubt. Next came the eldest sons of barons, the younger sons of peers, the eldest sons of viscounts, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the barons and the bishops, full of dignity, of majesty, and of grace likewise ; then the younger sons of dukes, the eldest sons of mar-

quises, the earls, the Lord Steward of the king's household, my Lords Suffolk and Bindon as exercising the office of Earl Marshal, the eldest sons of dukes, the marquises, the Lord Grand Chamberlain of England, the dukes, the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord President of the Council, the Lord High Treasurer, the Archbishop of York, the Lord Chancellor, then His Sacred Majesty and the prince in a gilt coach big as a state bed, emblazoned with the arms of England, surrounded by his faithful Germans, whose faces were the only homely and familiar objects the royal eye could rest on amidst the unaccustomed glare and pomp of the goodly show: finally the royal carriage was backed up by a troop of Horse Guards and Grenadier Guards.

The cannons roar from the Tower when the procession starts, bells ring and clang as if they sought to drown each other's sound, or, not succeeding in that design, to make as much confusion as possible. The loyal citizens have come down to see the wonderful sight, and line the fields by which the procession must pass; the boys climb up the trees, and, holding on by the branches, lustily shout out 'God save the King,'

but presently, when the procession is past, they are lost in clouds of dust, just as their loyal voices were drowned amidst the tramping of horses, the roll of coaches, the jangling of spurs, swords, and other military equipments.

It is a gay sight—this royal procession—as it now moves nearer to the good city of London, and approaches St. Margaret's Hill in Southwark, where the bells sound more numerous and noisy than those of Greenwich, the excitement is greater, the crowd more vast ; for here my Lord Mayor and the brave fathers of the City are to meet the king. Sure enough there are waiting already a detachment of the Artillery Company in their new buff coats, and the City marshals and City trumpets right gaily appavelled as became them on this day, and all on horseback, and the sheriffs' officers with javelins in their hands, and the Lord Mayor's officers in their sombre black gowns, and the water bailiff on horseback, so may it please you, carrying the City banner right proudly, and attended by his servant on foot in coloured livery, and all the City officers on horseback, with their servants, in bright liveries, on foot. And there was the king's banner borne by the Com-

mon Hunt, with his servant, likewise in livery, and likewise on foot; and the Common Crier, in his quaint gown, and the City sword-bearer, in his black damask gown and great gold chain, both goodly gentlemen, mounted on brave steeds, and the sheriffs and aldermen in all the splendour of their scarlet gowns, each attended by two servants in coloured livery, and, lastly, the Lord Mayor himself, the great City king, in his gown of crimson velvet, wearing his rich collar and jewel, looking, poor man, rather ill at ease, and perhaps with sundry fears of catching cold running through his mind by reason of having his head uncovered. There he stands, holding the City sword in his arms, with his four servants, in brand new liveries, looking on from a respectful distance as they wait behind; and at either side of him the Garter king-of-arms, and the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

When the king arrives at the spot where the City fathers await him, Sir Peter King, the Recorder, reads his fine speech, assuring His Majesty that the worthy citizens 'with impatience await for his royal presence amongst them

to secure those invaluable blessings which they promise themselves from a prince of the most illustrious merit.' Whilst listening to so much eloquence, George Lewis nods his head judiciously from time to time, though it might as well have been the recitation of a chapter of the Koran in the original, or some verses of a Chinese poem, for all that he understands of it. His Majesty having given back the sword to the City king, the procession moves on again, whilst the trained bands of the city of Southwark and the militia of Westminster and His Majesty's Foot Guards line the streets.

The officers of the parishes between Greenwich and London had had timely notice given them to have the king's highway mended and put in fit repair; and the Justices of the Peace in Surrey, my Lord Mayor of London, and the head bailiff of Westminster, had hints given them to have the streets through which the royal procession would pass 'well clenched from soil and filth,' which precautions were by no means unnecessary in those days.

On the day of the procession, Old London presented a splendid sight, but it was

not splendid enough to move the king, who went through the routine of the day with an immobility of facial muscle and general placidness worthy of a better cause. The great guns boom out as he crosses London Bridge, with its row of quaint shops and houses at each side, and the cannons thunder in St. James's Park in reply. London Town, with its hotels and coffee-houses, its narrow-windowed, high-pitched-roofed houses, its narrow streets, haply unconscious of dull uniformity, its wonderful signs and crooked byways, is dressed up for a holiday, and looks its best in the bright September sunshine.

Business is suspended, and all the shops are closed; the windows, balconies, and newly-erected scaffolds are crowded with eager faces that break into smiles and laughter at some action happening in the crowd below, or look with wonder as the procession moves past. From every window and balcony hang bright-coloured stuffs, and rich tapestries, and carpets of many hues; and all the spectators are dressed in gay colours, orders being given that none should appear in mourning on this happy day. Persons of quality

are distinguishable by their dresses of silk, satin, and velvet, decked with all the bravery of gold and silver brocade. Flags, banners, and arches cross the streets; the bells in the city are ringing, the fountains run with wine. At St. Paul's, the boys of Christ's Hospital stand in full force, their blue gowns and yellow stockings marking them out from the dingier colours of the mob. The king stops, and one of the boys steps forward, and repeats an oration in good Latin, with which His Majesty was so pleased that he condescended to give the lad the honour to kiss his royal hand. Close by are four thousand charity children, boys and girls, on a raised platform six hundred feet long, all eagerly waiting to catch a glance of His Majesty and the prince, and greet their royal ears with a hymn as soon as the sacred personages come within earshot of the four thousand voices.

When the hymn has been sung, the procession moves on again; there is renewed shouting; mighty huzzas are sent up from the throats of the crowd, who would shout as loudly to-morrow, and toss their caps as high in the air for

King James, if he would give them as good a show, and as much wine to drink and make merry over. George Lewis leans back in his coach, and wonders to himself why the people should make such a fuss and bother over him whilst there remained fifty-seven heirs to the British throne, most of whom had a far better right than he, and none of them a lesser claim.

It was almost eight o'clock in the evening when the king reached St. James's Palace, where again the cannons fired a salute, and the procession broke up. The upholders of the Hanover family have it all their own way to-day, and those who are supposed to favour the Stuarts must keep their tongues quiet and their brains free from hatching plots. The supporters of George Lewis are in great glee, and one of them, to wit, Colonel Chudleigh, must call out that one Mr. Allworth, who is a member of the House of Commons, is a Jacobite; upon which Mr. Allworth, who is in the royal procession, looking as loyal a man as any, is much concerned. When these two gentlemen have seen the king to his palace, nothing will satisfy them but they must fight; for some words have

passed between them, and the colonel insists on blood being spilt. So they drive in their coaches to Mary-le-bone fields, and then fight a duel, which ends tragically enough in Mr. Allworth's death.

When night came the fun and excitement were by no means over, neither was the ringing of bells, which pealed away as if they had not been at work all through the day, but were now as fresh and noisy as on a wedding morning. Bonfires were kindled, barrels of ale were tapped and emptied with great speed, and bands played through the city. At Spring Gardens, in St. George's Fields, there was 'an extraordinary concert of vocal and instrumental musick, by good masters,' where also a fat ox was roasted whole for the occasion, it 'being designed for diversion, and in order to drink the king's health, whom God long preserve.'

Illuminations made the streets brighter than day; fireworks were let off; in St. Paul's Churchyard was the representation of two burning dragons on one side, and on the other the motto 'Floreat Civitas,' a spectacle which mightily pleased the mob, who laughed, and cheered,

and drank the new king's health, and were as merry as a mob could be.

And so George I. came into a kingdom which was to be his henceforth.

CHAPTER II.

The King's first Visit to England in 1680—Proposal for Queen Anne—The King's Character—His Ignorance of the English Language—His Coronation—Change in the Feelings of the Mob—Anecdote of Baron Pollnitz—The King visits the City on Lord Mayor's Day—Entertained at the Guildhall—Conduct of the Lady Mayoress—Eulogies on the King—Bitter Words—Pamphlets and Ballads of the Period—The King's Heedlessness of Praise or Abuse.

AT one time George Lewis had been proposed as a suitor for the hand of the princess—afterwards Queen—Anne, and for this purpose had visited England in 1680; but his suit, for some reason or other not clearly known, met with no success. One thing, however, is certain, that the queen heartily disliked her Hanoverian kinsman even to the end of her days, and he never re-visited the kingdom over

which she reigned until she had done for ever with all mortal likes and dislikes.

The new king was not calculated to win popularity either by his manner or appearance; neither was he in the least degree refined, dignified, or graceful, and consequently he was without any of those fascinations proverbial to the rival claimant to the throne. In stature he was below the middle height, and inclined to corpulency, his face mild and dull of expression, with little pretension to good looks; in disposition slothful, gross, and avaricious; in manner placid, without indications of much intelligence, and usually inclined to be affable. 'In private life he would have been called an honest block-head,' writes Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'and Fortune, that made him a king, added nothing to his happiness, only prejudiced his honesty and shortened his days.' He was ignorant of the English language, and scarcely understood a word of what his new subjects were saying around him. All conversations with his Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, were carried on in Latin, the king knowing no English, and the Premier neither German nor French, so that Wal-

pole used to say he governed the nation by means of bad Latin. Even when George had spent years in England his knowledge of the language spoken by his subjects was almost as limited as on the first day of his arrival.

Once when on his birthday his little grandson William, afterwards Duke of Cumberland, came to visit him, he asked the boy at what hour he rose. 'When the chimney-sweepers went about,' answered the prince. 'Vat is de chimney-sweeper?' asked the king, whereon his grandson, opening wide his eyes, said, reproachfully, 'What, have you been in England so long and do not know what a chimney-sweeper is? Why, they are like that man there,' pointing, as he made this supplementary remark, to Lord Finch, who was remarkable for his dark complexion. In consequence of this ignorance, which he was too slothful or stupid to overcome, he never attended the consultations of his ministers, and hence arose what Earl Grey declared to be 'the highly beneficial practice of holding cabinet councils without the presence of the sovereign.' James Stuart, shortly after the proclamation of the new king, referred to George Lewis Guelph

as ‘a foreigner, ignorant of the laws, manners, customs, and language of England’; and Mr. Shippen, daring to hint at the same truth on one occasion in the House of Commons, was carefully locked up in the Tower.

It was little less than a burlesque to declare that this ignorant, selfish old debauchee was, by God’s grace, King and Defender of the Faith. This latter title he adopted just as he would have assumed that of Cousin to the Moon, had it been the fashion of the inhabitants of these happy isles over which he reigned to bestow the like on their monarch. He had, in reality, no religious belief of any kind, and never defended the faith by any particular act in his life. Indeed, he belonged to a house that entertained broad and convenient views regarding religious creeds and forms, as we may judge from the fact that when a certain French courtier advised the Electress Sophia to bring up her daughter in the Roman Catholic faith, that most sagacious woman replied her daughter had no religious belief just then, and what form it would take must totally depend on her future husband’s views; and this liberality of the king’s

mother was fully equalled by his father, Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, and Bishop of Osnaburgh, who built a church for such of his subjects as professed the Roman Catholic faith, and said that although he was too old to alter his creed, yet a change might prove beneficial to his house. One, at least, of his sons took this hint, and died a rigid Roman Catholic.

For days after his triumphant entry into the City the new king was presented with addresses from the corporations of towns all over Great Britain, whose names he had never heard in his life, and which he could not pronounce to save his head. He assured his people that he 'took them kindly,' with which flattering avowal they were completely satisfied. Then came his coronation.

Lady Cowper, who saw the ceremony from the pulpit stairs, which she was forced to mount by the great crowd at Westminster Abbey, says, 'One may easily conclude this was not a day of real joy to the Jacobites; however, they were all there looking as cheerful as they could, but very peevish with everybody that spoke to them.' She noticed in particular at the cere-

mony my Lady Dorchester, who had been mistress of James II., by reason of which she had been raised to the peerage, and who was consequently loyal to the Stuart cause.

‘My Lady Dorchester stood underneath me,’ writes this eye-witness, ‘and when the archbishop went round the throne demanding the consent of the people, she turned about to me and said, “Does the old fool think that anybody here will say no to his question when there are so many drawn swords?”’

On the day of his coronation the king saw Lord Bolingbroke for the first time, that wily time-server, who had plotted with might and main against the accession of George Lewis, having before sought an opportunity of presenting himself to the king in vain. Shrewd old George, seeing a face in the crowd which he did not recognize, asked his name when he came in turn to pay His Majesty homage, and Lord Bolingbroke, hearing him as he went down from the throne, turned about and made three profound bows, which the king took for what they were worth. George Lewis had never before seen such an assemblage of bishops and

divines, of peers and peeresses, statesmen, ministers, and soldiers. His stolidity was for once disturbed at the sight of such a concourse, and he declared, when the ceremony was over, that it 'reminded him of the Day of Judgment.'

The loyalty of the mob, which had been so enthusiastic on the king's entry, now suffered a change; on this day there were riots in several places, affronts were offered to the king, and voices had been heard shouting 'Damn King George!' The roughs and vagabonds were skilfully plying their trade and reaping a rich harvest from the crowd, and during the next week the *Post Boy* and the *Daily Courier* had many advertisements for articles stolen, for which, as was the habit of the times, the owners offered rewards and pledged themselves 'to ask no questions.' A blue cloth cloak, several watches and seals, a 'silver-hilted sword, with a black string and japanned about six or eight inches long on the blade,' which disappeared 'on the north side of the choir, east of the organ loft,' a silver snuff-box, with an agate lid and a picture in the inside, gilded within, a 'brown wig ty'd at the bottom,' were some of the

articles stolen in and about Westminster Abbey during the ceremony of the coronation. But perhaps the most daring act was the robbery from Westminster Hall, concerning which the following notice appeared in the papers for a considerable time:—

‘Whereas, several pieces of plate, as dishes, trencher-plates, knives, forks, spoons, and salts, together with pewter of all sorts, table-linen, and several other necessities which were provided and used in Westminster Hall at His Majesty’s coronation feast on Wednesday the 20th inst. (October) have been feloniously taken away from thence and are yet concealed, all persons who have any of His Majesty’s goods of what sort soever in their custody are hereby required forthwith to bring them to Whitehall, and there give notice of the same at His Majesty’s Board of Greencloth, upon pain of being prosecuted according to law; and if any person or persons shall there make discovery of any such of His Majesty’s goods, so unlawfully detained by any person whatsoever, they shall be well rewarded for the same.’

Baron Pollnitz, who was, it would seem, rather

given to gossip, says: 'I was told there was only one person, and that was a woman, who refused to own George I. for king, and that this happened upon the very day of the coronation, when a champion, armed from head to foot, entering into the banqueting-hall, and, according to custom, challenging any person whatsoever who did not acknowledge the Elector of Hanover as King of England, that lady threw down her glove, and with a very ill-timed effrontery made answer aloud that James III. was the only lawful heir of the crown, and that the Elector of Hanover was an usurper.' But this story, though pretty, is doubtful, as no confirmation is given of it in any of the chronicles of the time; indeed, it may possibly have been an exaggeration of my Lady Dorchester's words.

Little more than a week after the coronation, came the Lord Mayor's Day, when His Majesty received an invitation to the great civic banquet to meet the city fathers, who made vast preparations for the event. The king had never seen the Lord Mayor's Show, and in order that he might witness the sight in all its glory he, with the Prince and Princess of Wales, and a

retinue of many wondering Germans, took up his position in Cheapside, opposite Bow Church—the king sitting under a canopy of crimson velvet, with the princess on his right hand and the prince on his left, and the three young princesses grouped in front, like a royal group in a waxwork exhibition.

A goodly show was my Lord Mayor's procession; the citizens had a holiday to enjoy the sight in common with their king, and a right merry day it proved. The house from the balcony of which the royal party witnessed so much civic magnificence belonged to an honest Quaker, whom the king, being in a gracious mood, and a little anxious to exercise some of the functions belonging to his royal office, offered to knight; but he of the Society of Friends mildly shook his head, would not go down before His Majesty on bended knee, and declined the proffered honour. When the show was over, the sheriffs came in a body and conducted the royal family to the Guildhall; the new Lord Mayor, William Humphreys, kneeling at the entrance, presented the king with the City sword, who gave it back to his good keep-

ing, whereon his City majesty rose up and conducted the goodly company to the Mayor's Court, and thence into the long gallery, where were present a great number of ladies, who had been bidden to the feast, and whom the king saluted, after which the royal family went to the Hustings Court, where they placed themselves beneath a canopy, and His Majesty, being a gallant man, called out that the Lady Mayoress should sit at the same table with him. The members of his suite, with the members of the Privy Council, the principal ministers of State, the foreign ministers, the judges and sergeants, occupied several tables in the hall. Then the Lord Mayor, having the honour to present the first glass of wine to King George, his excellent Majesty drank it at one gulp, and, smacking his royal lips, looked round to see whom he could knight, supposing, as the *Daily Courant* observed, 'that some one should be presented.'

The hall was hung with rich tapestry for the occasion, 'there was a fine concert of musick' in the gallery, and the banquet was 'the most sumptuous and best ordered that has ever been seen, and the whole company declared an entire

satisfaction.' The Lady Mayoress was weighed down by pomp and state, and a black velvet dress with a train of many yards. It had been the custom for the queens to kiss the Lady Mayoress when royalty accepted civic hospitality, but her late Majesty of blessed memory had broken through the time-honoured custom, and there was much speculation as to whether the Princess of Wales would follow Queen Anne's example, or give the royal kiss. My Lady Mayoress was in nowise anxious to forego the ancient privilege, and advanced towards the Princess with much ceremony and expectation ; but the royal salute was not given, and my Lady Mayoress waxing indignant, called aloud for her train-bearer and her bouquet, by way of exhibiting the brief authority with which she had been newly vested. Perhaps she would have had the honour of feeling the royal lips brush her cheek, but that some mischievous spirit told the Princess and the king that the Lord Mayor had borrowed my lady for the day only to help him to do the honours proper to the occasion ; and they could only be persuaded afterwards that this was not the case by the consideration that, if he had bor-

rowed her, he would have made a better selection.

About eight o'clock the royal party left the Guildhall. A great crowd had assembled to see them drive away; and that some violence occurred amongst the mob can be gathered from this curious notice which appeared in the *Post Boy* a few days afterwards:—

'A man had the misfortune on Friday, the Lord Mayor's Day, to have a violent fall in the entry at Guildhall at eight a'clock at night, after His Majesty was gone from thence. Several boards were beaten down at the end of the entry, and he lost his hat, with a mourning hat-band upon it, his per-wig, and an oaken-stick. Whoever will bring 'em to George Nash, Corn Chandler, in Wood Street, near Cripple-gate, shall receive twenty shillings, or proportionable for either. If they have disposed of the per-wig, send him word where, and he will return the money, and give 'em something for their pains; the wig being of his children's hair.'

Though no blows were struck at George Lewis on his arrival, yet sharp-pointed and sure-winged missives were aimed at him and

his family, and his mistresses, and his German favourites, and his two Turkish slaves, who had accompanied him to England, and who were attached to his royal person, through the press and pamphlets, the coarseness and bitterness of which were only equalled by the fulsome adulation of those devoted to extolling him and his cause. The specimens left us in the manuscripts and publications of the day cannot but make us smile when we think of the maliciousness on the one hand, and the sycophancy on the other, which dictated them, and make us feel glad that we live in times happily free from such unholy strife.

A certain Mr. Croxall, who was no doubt a wily man in his day, published an ode containing many large capitals, dedicated of course to a noble patron, in many ponderous phrases, which had a great success. It declared that it was no wonder the winter had mildly passed, that the spring had been serene and clear, ‘that the summer ’scaped the mildew-blast,’ and, in short, that England had become a paradise, for all these strange and good things had happened, forsooth, because—

‘ Great George, like Phosphor from afar,
Decked with resplendent beams, arises bright
To cheer the expecting world with more prevailing light.’

According to the same ingenious and imaginative gentleman—who was the author of ‘Two original cantos of Spenser’ (?)—Jove’s messengers paid various little attentions to the king.

‘ Some wreath his Brow with Rays all beauty bright,
Some with ambrosial Fragrances bespread
His Royal Robes with glist’ring Glory dight ;
Some with gold Circlets bind his Sacred Head,
And o’er his manly Form unusual Graces shed.
Joyn’d to his lofty Car each gen’rous Steed,
Proud of his Charge, to Albion’s Wishes kind,
Bounds o’er *Germania’s* Fields with winged Speed.
Swift in their course they leave the clouds behind,
And that which drives the clouds, the nimble Wind.
Onward they press, and eager in their Heat
The Massy Bit with foaming fury grind ;
Their reeking Sides bedew’d with frothy sweat,
The hollow Plain resounds beneath their trampling
Fleet.’

But all this is mild in comparison with other eulogistic terms. The little dull-visaged old man, who waddled when he walked, and was awkward in all his movements, was suddenly discovered to have ‘a form god-like in beauty’ by one scribe, who was, moreover, quite con-

vinced that the English language failed to give a verbal portrait of this mighty monarch.

‘Such majesty at its full length to draw
Might the best master of the pencil awe.’

Richard Steele adds his mite in declaring :—

‘A finished prince, a hero fills the throne,
Graced with a genius martial like her own ;’

‘her’ being Britannia. In one of the papers published a few days before his arrival, and probably by one who had never seen him, the king is described in sonorous prose, not wisely but too well. ‘His person is comely and grave,’ says this anonymous writer, ‘his countenance has majesty and sweetness so mixed that nothing can be better suited to the throne of a king : he speaks readily rather than fluently, apt and proper, without long premeditation or affectation of being quick. His temper is goodness itself, inexpressibly obliging, to the last degree courteous and kind, yet not lowered beneath the dignity of his birth. He is steady in counsel, sedate in resolving, vigorous in executing, brave and gallant in the field, wise and politic in the camp, enterprising in matters of action, and yet

of so calm a courage that he who dares do anything that is fit to do, can never be in danger of precipitating into what is impracticable to be done. In short, if it may be said of any man in Europe, it may be said of His Majesty that he is born for counsel and fitted to command the world.'

After this it is somewhat curious to reverse the medal and learn that the self-same king can be styled by his subjects 'the jest of Europe and the factions' tool,' that his arrival in England can be compared to the seven plagues of Egypt, and that in plain language he is

'Covered with crimes of deepest dye,
Murder, usurpation, tyranny.'

One ballad, which enjoyed a wide circulation, said—

'If Queen Anne had done justice, George had still
Over slaves and German boobies reigned;
On leeks and garlick still regaled his fast
In dirty dowlas shirts and fustians dressed.'

Nothing, indeed, could equal the venom of the lampoons that were spread near and far, sung in the streets, and passed from hand to hand by the very courtiers. An epigram, preserved in the

Landsdowne manuscripts, was to be found in all quarters of the town, and set forth—

‘ When Israel first provok’d the living Lord,
He punished them with famine, plague, and sword,
Still they sinn’d on. He in His wrath did fling
No thunderbolt among them—but a king,
A George-like king, was heaven’s severest rod,
The utmost vengeance of an angry God.
God in His wrath sent Saul to punish Jewry,
And George to England in a greater fury ;
For George in sin as far exceeded Saul
As ever Bishop Burnet did St. Paul.’

A pamphlet, remarkable for its freedom, alludes to the king as ‘a Hanoverian rat, of a small size, being just come over and very lean, and had what the French call a *mine affamée*, but at the same time so voracious for food there was nothing like it in any animal whatever : for not only doth it digest iron, but steel, brass, pewter, tin, copper, silver, and gold (of the two latter it is particularly fond), and, in fine, everything that comes within its clutches, and every animal it can overcome without danger.’

The king’s mistresses were spoken of in the freest and grossest language ; his German ministers were termed ‘pimps and whelps and reptiles,’ and the Prince of Wales and other mem-

bers of the royal family came in for their share of abuse likewise. Nor was this spirit alone confined to London; it seemed to take to itself wings and spread all over the country. In Exeter one particularly obnoxious ballad was discovered, entitled 'Nero the Second,' which declared—

'George has usurped our royal James's throne,'
and added,

'Free-born Britons, since a tyrant reigns,
Assert your liberties, shake off your chains.'

The printer of this, one Philip Bishop was tried, found guilty, heavily fined, and imprisoned.

The war of words waged hot and strong. Sedition was openly uttered in the court, and posted on the walls in the streets; dissension was rife not only amongst statesmen, but amongst the meanest of His Majesty's subjects, not only amongst the laity, but amongst clergymen of all ranks; the pulpit became a political platform until a proclamation was issued forbidding 'the mention of politics or subjects' verging thereon in sermons.' But whilst all this hate, malice, and uncharitableness raged, and the pamphleteers and

writers of lampoons caricatured his person and spoke vile things of his actions, His Sacred Majesty turned a deaf ear to them, and consoled himself through many hours of the day by the sweet companionship of his ugly, fat mistresses, who cut out figures in paper for his royal diversion, whilst he, forgetful of the cares of State, lit his pipe and smoked placidly, now and then laughing and clapping his hands when Schulenburg had, in cutting out a figure, hit on some peculiarity of feature or figure in a courtier or minister.

CHAPTER III.

Pictures of the Period—The Fashionable Beaux—Their fine Speeches—Their Courtesy, Dress, Love of Wit, and Repartee—Carelessness of Politics—Jack Spencer and his Brother—An Afternoon in Town—At the Play-houses—The Masculine Beau—Exhibition at the Tennis Court in St. James's—A Riot in Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre—Rich, the Manager—The Ladies of the Period—On the Mall.

WHILST politicians wrangled and metaphorically shook their stout fists in each other's faces, the beaux about town, and men and women of quality who figured at the court, led a life as merry as could be, as the records of the times show us. Society in those days was a wonderful institution, and we scarcely know whether to grieve or laugh over the pictures it presents; they are full of life and colour, and are certainly a curious study, and so it is better to stand and stare at them for awhile, smiling instead of frowning.

The fashionable beaux were in contrast to these of the present age, gaudy, magnificent creatures, amongst whom the traditions and manners of the Stuarts yet lingered; their heads were almost as light as their hearts, and they had something about them of that stately grace belonging to an older day which made old Colley Cibber speak of them as having 'the stateliness of the peacock;' their speeches were loaded with flowery compliments, pleasant to hear even if untrue; and their very movements betrayed a quaint courtesy lost for ever to later generations.

They looked indeed wonderfully dainty in their well-combed periwigs, their coats powdered half way down the back, their waistcoats of coloured silk or satin richly embroidered with gold or silver lace, their velvet breeches and coloured stockings, and their great silver-buckled shoes. See how daintily they trip along the Mall, their handsomely ornamented swords dangling by their sides, their scented lace handkerchiefs hanging with an air of carelessness from their pockets, their well-gloved hands arranging their cravats

or securing the patches upon their faces.

The chief object of their lives was to dress handsomely, enjoy intrigues, cultivate wit, and patronise the play-house or the Grub Street author. To give utterance to a piece of smart repartee, wear the newest cut coat, or pay court to some notorious mistress were advantages for which they would have given one of their ears, if such a donation would not have disfigured the beauty they so much prized. They composed epigrams, wrote lampoons and libels, talked scandal—the broader and coarser the better,—and indited poetic and amorous verses and little notes to the mistresses with whom they believed themselves in love; which missives they perfumed, tied with ribbons of favourite colours, and had them conveyed by mysterious ways, which latter stroke of diplomacy was believed to add considerably to the desired height of fascination.

As a rule, they cared nothing for parliaments or politics, so long as they could deck themselves out in gay plumage, compose their sonnets, and play cards till the small hours with my Lady Betty or Sal Sailsbury of gay renown. They

never wasted their time or soiled their delicate hands with the inky sheets of the *Tatler*, *Gazette*, or *Spectator*; they enjoyed wit coming in all its full first flavour from the lips of professional humourists; they were elegant conversationalists, effeminate triflers, graceful gentlemen, and as a rule heartless lovers who would sacrifice the fame of the woman they professed to adore for sake of a well-turned phrase or a sparkling *bon mot* at the expense of her honour.

It was generally the habit of the beau to remain in bed until midday, where he received visitors, being habited for the occasion in a cambric shirt elaborately trimmed with handsome lace, usually the handiwork of some fair admirer, having his long periwig carefully powdered and arranged with an eye to effect over the pillow. At noon he languidly rose, and having bathed his face in washes guaranteed by the quacks to make it beautiful—if not for ever, at least for a day—put tiny patches on cheek and chin, rubbed essence of orange or jasmine on his eyebrows, soaked his handkerchief in rose water, and arranged and disarranged his cravat for an hour or so before the mirror; he was then

ready for his dainty little dinner. From this meal the roast beef of Old England, the boiled mutton of equally ancient Wales, or pork, the detested of Jews, were conspicuous by their absence, they being meats too gross for his appetite.

Dinner being over, a chair was called, for the fine gentleman seldom vouchsafed to walk, to the great delight and profit of chairmen. Jack Spencer and his brother Charles, who afterwards succeeded to the Marlborough title, who were men of this type, never condescended to 'dirty their fingers with siler' when paying for their conveyance; and occasionally it vastly diverted these young gentlemen to see the chairmen fight for the honour of carrying them, the rogues knowing quite well that a guinea instead of a shilling would reward them, no matter how short the journey might be. The beau usually had himself conveyed to one of the coffee-houses, which at this hour were crowded with men of all degree. At 'Wills,' which will be mentioned at greater length further on, he will be sure to meet Mr. Gay, the poet, who is now high in favour at the new

court, or Barton Booth, the Drury Lane actor, or Denis, the critic, little Mr. Pope's enemy. Mr. Congreve, whose 'Way of the World' has been hissed off the Lincoln's Inn play-house, is certain to be there playing the fine gentleman to his heart's delight; and if he chances to go and take the air in the park, and leaves Mr. Cibber behind, that sharp-tongued gentleman will be sure to take the opportunity of telling his hearers how the great Monsieur Voltaire called to pay his respects to Mr. Congreve, and make him some fine compliments on his plays, but the author, affecting to think little of them, told the French philosopher he had given up the writing of comedies, and wished to be visited not as an author, but as a gentleman; on which Monsieur Voltaire had said that if he had only been a gentleman, and not an author, he would not have troubled himself to have called on him. Then old Colley Cibber takes a huge pinch of snuff, shakes his wig, and chuckles with comfortable laughter at the discomfort which this answer must have given his brother—or rather rival playwright.

Presently in comes Mr. Swift, the sharp-tongued

Irish dean, his pockets filled with papers and his head with plots, and by the time he has sipped his coffee and repeated a biting epigram or two, which he pretends to have heard from a friend just as he was coming up Piccadilly, but which in reality he had set afloat on the town a week ago, it is time for our friend the beau to hasten towards Five Courts, at the lower end of St. Martin's Street, near Hedge Lane, where is, as the advertisement reads, 'Mr. Rymus, lately come from the Court of France, who has brought with him a complete company of rope-dancers, and joined with the widow Barne's company: where you will see performed the best of rope-dancing, vaulting, and slack rope, some particular Italian performances, and especially the Ladder, danced by Mr. Harvey, the only master of Europe. You will be entertained by a good concert of musick, and the diverting humours of your old friend Pickle Herring, with a new dance to be danced after the French way, which has not yet been performed on our stage. We shall endeavour to entertain the Quality every day with fresh diversions, the lowest price sixpence, pit eighteenpence, stage half-a-crown.'

If he does not patronise the entertainment at

Five Courts, he may journey towards Lambeth Wells, where, 'at the desire of several gentlemen and ladies, will be choice musick, with French and country dances, for the benefit of Captain Hill. Note that, for the better encouragement of the above said Captain Hill, a gentleman will perform a solo upon his harp, who is particularly well known to be famous on that instrument. A scaramouch and harlequin by two young gentlemen, and the countryman's dance. To begin at two a'clock, and continue till nine.'

To keep up his character as a man of pleasure, the beau must put in an appearance in the evening at the play-house, where he exhibits himself, first at one side, and then at the other, and finally condescending even to enter the pit, in order that he might become the object of more general attention; getting up on the benches between the acts, whilst the candles at the foot-lights are being snuffed, that he may view the house through an opera-glass, which had at this time not long come into fashion. He bows to such persons as have the happiness of his acquaintance, and exhibits his handsomely-dressed person to his uttermost satisfaction. It is usual

for him, indeed, to be seen at the Lincoln's Inn Field play-house, as well as at Drury Lane ; not that his love of the drama, legitimate or otherwise, induced his visits, but by reason of its being fashionable to be present at many performances. Indeed, it was part of his *rôle* to show his contempt or indifference to the play and players ; and, when the curtain rose, it was the custom of this superfine gentleman to turn his back on the stage, as if he were insufferably bored. If by chance he did condescend to notice the performance, it was merely that he might have the opportunity of saying aloud to one of the fairer sex—whom perhaps he was anxious to become acquainted with—‘ Dem me, madam, here’s a dem’d play ! Madam, how can your ladyship sit it ? The devil take me if I could not write a better extempore ! ’ That he could not write a better was a certainty, yet his satanic majesty did not take him at his word, to the world’s loss.

Before the play was over out whips my beau, and, it being yet little more than seven o’clock, betakes himself to the park, where he may meet some lady in hood and mask anxious for adven-

ture and diversion, to whom my fine beau advances, whether he has the advantage of her acquaintance or not, and with the freedom of the time towards masks and hoods, commences, 'Oh, madam, renounce me if I am not ready to expire!' To which the masked one makes reply, 'What is the cause of your distress, sir?' 'Stop my vitals, madam,' he answers, 'but I've been to the play-house, and the fellows there made me almost choke with laughter.' And to revive himself he takes out his great gold snuff-box, set with pearls, having on the inner side of the lid a coloured picture of some goddess or charming houri, and sniffs a few grains of the contents with an exquisite grace, attained but by long practice.

The more masculine beaux, though having many qualities in common with their more superfine brethren, were a different style of gallant. They were fond of picking quarrels, being mighty dexterous in the use of the sword, and had a right ready will to drink a bottle of good wine when and where they could. They were not much given to frequent coffee or chocolate houses, where the wits and scrib-

blers and politicians prevailed in large numbers, but found it far more congenial to their tastes to witness 'trials of skill at the bear-garden at Marrow Bone Fields, at the back-side of Soho Square, at the Boarding House, between David Bane, North Briton, master of the noble science of defence, and Timothy Buck of Clare Market, master of the said science.' When the trial of skill is over, the beau will step down into the ring, and perhaps put on the gloves, to the delight of the crowd, and, after a few rounds, carry away one of the masters of the noble science to a neighbouring tavern to share a bottle of wine and spend the evening in his company and that of some kindred spirits.

The Tennis Court in St. James's Street, Haymarket, was an entertainment where the masculine beaux—as we must call them for the sake of distinction—were to be found in numbers. The entertainment of this court consisted of the performances of a vaulting company, some rope-dancing, and the exhibition of a 'strong man,' who was agreeable enough to allow six men with sledge-hammers to break a stone of four hundred weight on his breast, and afterwards,

to show that he was far from being disabled by the recent exercise performed on his breast, he suspended a horse with a chain around it with one hand in mid-air, to the satisfaction of his audience. The cock-fight, too, was a favourite pastime with these gentlemen of quality, who betted large sums on their favourite birds, and looked on at the sport with great delight.

It was sometimes the good will and pleasure of these beaux to get up a riot in one of the play-houses, and we have an instance of this in an occurrence that took place in the Lincoln's Inn Field Theatre a few years after George Lewis came to England. Some of these young men, among whom was a noble peer, entered the play-house in a right noisy manner, and commenced making audible comments of by no means a flattering character on the actors and actresses, and causing a general disturbance. Rich, the manager, after a while, stepped forward, and administered a mild rebuke. This was what the beaux required. Their blood was up at the idea of being reprimanded by a mere playing-fellow, and the noble peer before mentioned, to show the hereditary valour of

his house, jumped on to the stage and administered a resounding smack to the managerial face, which Rich bravely returned with interest. This was more than was expected, and far more than could be tolerated. The other beaux at once rushed on the stage, oversetting the footlights, drawing their swords, and swearing they would run the manager through the body. Rich, however, had stout adherents in the members of his company, who drew their swords, and defended their manager bravely.

In a moment the whole house was in wild confusion. Women screamed and rushed out, the instruments in the orchestra were overturned and smashed, half the lights were knocked down and extinguished, people climbed from the pit into the boxes; those in the gallery, delighted at the prospect of such a gratuitous sight, cheered lustily, and, amidst the general uproar, swords were heard clashing, and the voices of the combatants swearing. It was a genuine stage battle. At last the fine gentlemen began to get worsted in the fray; the actors drove them at the point of the sword from the stage to the pit, and from

the pit out into the street. Here the beaux, pulling themselves together, rushed into the house, bent on destruction, tore down the curtain, cut the velvet upholstery of the boxes, broke the chairs, smashed the sconces, and would have burned the house to satisfy their vengeance, but that one of the gallant actors—Richard Quinn—supported by a body of constables, came down on them, brought them to the lock-up, and finally to what did them duty as their senses. After this memorable riot, the king commanded that soldiers should guard the play-houses in future, whence arose a custom that became time-honoured.

Under the friendly shades of night, the beaux of this species were at their best: then, drunk as lords after the day's pleasure, they went through the streets shouting, knocking down the stout watchman with a hearty will, locking him up in his box, and rolling it about, smashing windows with a recklessness that was magnificent, swearing great oaths that had a fierce sound, and playing such tricks as made them the terror of the town.

The ladies of the period were as frivolous

and pleasure-loving as were the sterner sex. In all ages men's manners and morals are shaped and fashioned according to women's ideal; and, under the early years of Hanoverian rule, the fairer sex seemed at best to entertain but a poor opinion of morality. Intrigues were the order of the day; faithlessness to the highest and most sacred duties looked on merely as a pleasant pastime. For a married woman not to have a history was indeed to be sadly out of fashion. The language which even the finest ladies wrote, spoke, and listened to with approbation was coarse and indecent to a degree; and the stage, as the mirror of the times, reflected the most objectionable characteristics of the age.

Baron Pollnitz, the intelligent foreigner before mentioned, speaking of them, says, 'The ladies here have little to employ them: their amusement being to give and receive visits; to go often to court; to have the pleasure of being seen, which really is of all pleasures that which they seem to take most delight in. They turn out in a morning with a black velvet mask on their faces, a coif on in form of a hat, with the brim down, a

round gown and a white apron, and in this trim they go to the park, or where else they please. They take the air very much on horseback; in short, they do what they have a mind to. Meantime the husbands are seldom of their parties, and trouble themselves very little whither they go, being too much philosophers, and of too good sense to make their honour dependent on the virtue of their wives . . . When they go out in a *deshabille*, they commonly put on a *camlet* cloak as long as their petticoats, which is closed before, and on each side there's a slit through which they put their arms; they have withal a hood of the same stuff as the cloak, which is tied under the chin with a coloured ribbon. Nor is this dress unbecoming to the sex, for 'tis very often used by the citizens' wives and daughters, and is also much worn among the gay ladies when they go upon intrigues with their lovers; at which time they repair, thus rigged, on board certain wherries that carry them to houses of entertainment designed for such interviews.'

When they went out at noon, the Mall, situated in St. James's Park, was the principal

promenade, which at that hour was always crowded by persons of quality, and those who pertained to become fashionable. Here the royal family often came, especially the Prince and Princess of Wales, attended by halberdiers in showy uniforms of scarlet, with frontings of blue velvet and gold lace, black velvet caps ornamented with white feathers, making in all a goodly display. After dinner the fine ladies paid rounds of visits, drank tea, talked scandal behind their fans, damned a few reputations, and then with lighter hearts prepared for the opera, the Court drawing-room, or some private assembly. Such were the belles and beaux under the first Georges.

CHAPTER IV.

No Queen on the English Throne—The King's Marriage to Sophia Dorothea—Madame Platen and her Plots—Madame Schulenburg—Count Königsmark—His Tragic Death—George Augustus obtains a Divorce—Sophia Dorothea's Imprisonment and Death—The King's Mistresses—Madame Schulenburg created Duchess of Kendal—Madame Kilmansegge—The Ladies of the House of Platen—German Favourites at the English Court—Madame Platen the Younger.

WHILST the first of the Hanoverian monarchs reigned there was no queen to share his throne, his wife being kept a prisoner in the castle of Ahlen, as was called the half ruinous brick and wood farm-house that stood by the melancholy river Aller, in a black and almost deserted district of the Duchy of Zell.

Thirty-two years before his accession to the English throne, George Lewis had married his

first cousin, Sophia Dorothea of Zell, for the purpose of re-uniting the family dominions. Sophia Dorothea was the daughter of George William, Duke of Zell, was in her sixteenth year, when, against her inclinations, and notwithstanding that she had formed a previous attachment to the young Crown Prince of Wolfenbittel, she was married to George Lewis Guelph. The Court of Hanover—her new home—as has been already hinted, was thoroughly licentious. Her father-in-law, Ernest Augustus, Bishop of Osnaburgh and Elector of Hanover, was a man whose life was devoted to pleasure, and whose mistresses openly lived beneath the same roof, and shared almost the same honours as his wife—without much interference from her. One of these women, Madame Platen, wife to his prime minister, was especially vile, clever, and unscrupulous, and exercised a powerful influence over her aged lover. Her sister, Madame Busche, was the acknowledged mistress of his son, George Lewis.

When the young bride, who was extremely beautiful, arrived at Hanover, these two women regarded her with all the malignity of their vile

natures, and soon commenced plotting to injure her, so far as they could.

From the first George Lewis betrayed no love for his young wife; he had already proved himself an apt imitator of his father's vices, and even at this time was by nature brutal, degraded, and little capable of understanding or appreciating the delicacy and charm of the woman to whom he was united. His manners had all the roughness, his language the coarseness, and his habits the freedom of the camp in the latter part of the seventeenth century; and in person he was by no means attractive or likely to win the affections of any woman. It was plain from the first that for Sophia Dorothea there was little chance of happiness, and yet the earlier years of her married life went by smoothly enough. She gave birth, in 1683, to a son (afterwards George II. of England), and subsequently to a daughter, who became Queen of Prussia. By her unerring conduct, and her gentle disposition, she succeeded in winning the esteem and friendship of her father and mother-in-law.

However, she was not long destined to enjoy

peace. Madame Platen and her sister looked on her with daily increasing envy; the former saw that the old Elector entertained a regard for his daughter-in-law, which she feared might ultimately weaken her own power over him, an end she by no means desired. Madame Platen being a wily woman, and knowing full well the weaknesses of the House of Hanover, infamously sent for her daughter, and established her at court in the hope of making her George Lewis's mistress, and thus separating him from his wife. Madame Platen's daughter was young, her manners agreeable, and she was not without wit. The consequence was that the too susceptible heart of George Lewis, which was never difficult to enflame, was smitten by her charms, and he quickly offered to make her his mistress, a position she then refused, simply because she was in love with a merchant named Kilmansegge, whom she shortly afterwards married to save herself from social ruin. Some time afterwards, however, she deserted her husband to accept an offer she had once declined.

Meanwhile Madame Platen, who was not disheartened by the failure of her plot, through

what she considered the foolishness of her daughter, brought Madame Schulenburg, who was maid-of-honour to the old Electress, under George Lewis's notice, and Sophia Dorothea soon had the mortification of seeing him pay this woman the attention which he denied her. To increase the breach which this knowledge caused, Madame Platen and her minions left nothing undone. On the one hand they openly boasted of their conquests, on the other they traduced her good name not only to her husband but to the courtiers. Overhearing one day some vile piece of slander which they had whispered concerning her, she hastened to her husband, and asked him, with tears in her eyes, to defend her honour from the attacks of these women, but he brutally laughed at her. Rendered almost mad by such treatment, and for the moment gaining courage, she upbraided him with the wrongs which he had done her, and which she had borne in silence, on which our future king rushed at her, struck her, and would have probably strangled her in his passion, if her cries had not brought timely assistance.

Shortly after this, Count Königsmark came to

Hanover on an evil day, and was appointed to the post of Captain of the Guards. He had known Sophia Dorothea from infancy, and at one time had been spoken of as an approved suitor for her hand. In person he was remarkably handsome, in figure graceful, polished from his intimacy with almost every European court, a gay and gallant soldier, and, in every possible way, a complete contrast to George Lewis. On his arrival, the time-honoured mistress of the Elector, Madame Platen, fell in love with him; her heart, which had been so often and so readily captivated, was once more conquered by young Königsmark, and she soon discovered means to make him aware of the fact; but the Count, though a man of by no means rigid morals, remained blind to her elderly charms.

He even laughed at her wiles, and made mention of her name with more familiarity than politeness in many amusing sketches before the courtiers, all of which were faithfully repeated to her again. She felt herself a woman scorned, which we are informed on very excellent authority is a dangerous thing, and she, thirsting for vengeance, waited for some means of putting it

into execution. This, unhappily, presented itself to her all too soon. Sophia Dorothea, deserted by her husband, subject to the insults of his mistresses, and separated from her old home, welcomed the society of a man whose presence brought back to her the memory of happier times, and whose agreeable manners and society helped her to forget for a while her present misery. That the friendship which was renewed between them at this time ever led to any closer intimacy, it is impossible to say, for those who have written on the subject differ as widely as the hemispheres in their opinions of her innocence.

The Count was a courtier and a man of the world, who had not been innocent of intrigues, which on the one hand might favour the idea of her guilt; but on the other, when, after her divorce, she received communion once a week, she never omitted to make a solemn protestation of her innocence. Her husband was however glad of the opportunity of ridding himself of a wife whom he had never loved, and now detested.

But, whether she was guilty or not, her friendship for Count Königsmark served Madame

Platen as a means of visiting her hatred on both of them when her plot was fully ripe.

George Lewis at this time was absent from Hanover, and Madame Platen was obliged to confine her poisonous insinuations against the Count and Sophia Dorothea to the old Elector, whom she found harder to convince than she had anticipated. He declared that, before believing his daughter-in-law guilty, he would require proofs of her sin, but added that, if such could be given, he would not hesitate to punish Count Königsmark. Therefore Madame Platen, nothing daunted, caused a note late one night to be left in the Count's apartment, summoning him to the Princess's rooms, which, on reading, he without hesitation hastened to obey; no sooner had he fallen into this trap than Madame Platen rushed to the Elector, told him that the Count was secreted in his daughter-in-law's apartments, and demanded a guard for his arrest. To this he assented, called a guard, told them to obey Madame Platen's instructions, and take prisoner the person she would point out to them, and, if necessary, to use force.

This evil woman was quite satisfied now; she

secreted herself in a long hall, through which the Count must pass on his way to his rooms, where she also stationed the guard ; then, hearing Königsmark's footsteps approaching, she told them to fall on the man who advanced.

It was late at night ; the great hall was seemingly dark and deserted, and as Königsmark came along three men suddenly sprang upon him. He stepped back, and, suspecting some foul play, drew his sword ; they attacked him furiously, he defended himself bravely, and wounded two of them. This unequal fight of three to one was sharp and brief ; his sword soon snapped, and he was at the mercy of the guards, who, maddened with the wounds they had received, flung him to the ground, when they stabbed him several times. Before he died, his eyes opened once, and fell upon Madame Platen, who had watched the encounter, and was now glaring down at him, fiend-like, with malignity and triumph in her face. He raised himself for a second, and cursed her ; she placed her foot upon his mouth, and crushed his lips with her heel. When she looked at him again, he was dead. The body was at once taken

and bricked up in a wall, where long afterwards, George Lewis discovered the skeleton on making some changes in the Hanoverian palace.

It has been stated by Archdeacon Coxe that George Lewis obtained a divorce from the Ecclesiastical Consistory in Hanover, which was passed on the 25th of December, 1694.

This consistory was composed of laymen and ecclesiastics, all of whom were the puppets of the prince, and who, before delivering sentence, were, it is believed, bribed. At the hearing of the case it is well worth noting that no mention was made of the murdered Count Königsmark. The suit was brought forward nominally because of Sophia Dorothea's desire of separating from her brutal husband, whom she refused to live with after this tragedy. The court gave George Lewis Guelph full permission to marry again, 'Since,' said the decree which it issued, 'in similar cases of desertion, it has been permitted to the innocent party to remarry, which the other is forbidden. The same judicial power will be exercised in the present instance in favour of His Serene Highness the Crown Prince.'

In the last years of the king's life, he is said to have invited her over to England, and would have entered into a reconciliation with her, but she refused his advances, and declared that, 'if she were innocent, he was unworthy of her; and, if she were guilty, she was unworthy of him.' On the king making a further application to her, Lady Suffolk tells us Sophia Dorothea refused to hear him unless he would first publicly beg her pardon for the grave wrongs he had done her, adding that 'what most afflicted her was the disgrace that would be brought on her children; and, if she were only pardoned, that would not remove it.'

Her death took place on the 2nd of November, 1726. It was merely announced in the *Gazette* that the Duchess of Ahlen died at her residence, and no notice was taken of the event at the English Court, but that of Prussia went into mourning, the queen being daughter of Sophia Dorothea. When King George heard of this he was furious, and loaded his daughter with a torrent of abuse in all the freedom of guttural German. The Prince of Wales had always espoused his mother's cause, and on

her death this verse, supposed to express his sentiments on the subject of mourning, was freely circulated :—

‘ A mother dead, and am I from the throne
Commanded not to show myself her son ?
Well ! since the decent sable I’m denied
For her, my parent on the surer side,
Remember, George, t’will be my turn one day,
This, and all former favours to repay ;
And when that long-expected time I see,
Let Kendal, at her peril, mourn for thee.’

Had she survived her husband, it is said that her son, George II., intended to have made her Queen Dowager, or Regent of Hanover, but he never had an opportunity of putting these intentions into execution, as she died about a year before George I. This statement was made by Lady Suffolk, who told it to Horace Walpole. She also informed him that she was surprised, on going to the new queen the morning after the arrival of the news of the death of George I., at seeing hung up in her dressing-room a whole length portrait of a lady in royal robes, and, in the bed-chamber, a half length of the same ; neither of which she had ever seen before. These represented Sophia Dorothea ; her son

had long kept them concealed, not daring to produce them during his father's life. But, if there was no queen on the English throne during the first George's reign, his sacred majesty was not left lonely in his domestic life, which was solaced by his German mistresses, one of whom accompanied whilst another followed him to his new dominions, leaving a third, Madame Platen, the younger, behind.

The appearance in London of this detachment of his seraglio soon after his arrival was the signal for an outburst of raillery and ribaldry which they were well calculated to call forth.

The two principal ladies belonging to his establishment were Madame Schulenburg, whose name will be remembered as having been selected by Madame Platen to sever all ties between George Lewis and his wife, and the influence she obtained then, strange to say, lasted during the king's life. The Schulenburg was no beauty. From her great height, she was called by the irreverent (in whose eyes she failed to become sacred by reason of the king's choice) the 'May-pole,' a title she was generally known by throughout the Court and town until her death.

She was unusually tall; her complexion was yellow, her figure lean, and her general appearance unpleasant.

When George Lewis received in Hanover news of Queen Anne's death, the 'Maypole' was by no means elated at the prospect of her lover becoming king, though she was well aware her pension would assume proportions suitable to his increased dignity. She had no knowledge of the country, and but a slight acquaintance with the people over whom her royal lover was called to reign. She knew that he had no strong claim to the throne. She had heard that the English were a self-willed people, who had but some time before shown how little they thought of kings by depriving one of them of his head; she feared that a similar fate might await her beloved, and perhaps she at the hands of the people should suffer likewise, an ending which she was not sufficiently loyal and heroic enough to covet. Altogether she preferred a small income in safety at Hanover to a larger one in England with probable peril, and she refused the new king's invitation to accompany him.

She might indeed have stayed at the Electoral Court for ever; and the light of her presence, vast sums of money, open scandal, ridicule to the English nation, and disgrace to the peerage might have been spared, did she not learn that her rival, Madame Kilmansegge (who she believed could not stir out of Hanover in consequence of her heavy debts), was striving to escape from her creditors and preparing to sail with the king. Then her jealousy was roused. The 'Maypole' swayed with anger, and, running to the king, declared that she could not bear the idea of parting with him, that she would run all risks rather than separate herself from his royal person, and that she would follow him to England, a statement which he received with great delight.

Even in Hanover the Schulenburg's beauty was not universally admired, for the Countess of Suffolk, who afterwards occupied a position with George II. similar to that of the 'Maypole' to his father, was wont to tell, in after-days, that when she was at the Hanoverian Court, and attending a ball one night, the old Electress Sophia said aloud, but in English—

‘Look at that mawkin,’ pointing to Schulenburg; ‘and think of her being my son’s mistress!’—a remark which was lost upon the lady so delicately referred to, as she did not, in common with her lover, understand the language in which it was spoken. She had numbered sixty springs when she came to England; her surprise at the size and wealth of London was great, and accordingly her desire to enrich herself and her ambitions grew to equal proportions. In Hanover she had been satisfied with the small annuity the Prince allowed her, and the ‘honour of his visits’ when he had nothing else to do, which happened very often. ‘She was so much of his own temper,’ says Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, ‘that I do not wonder at the engagement between them. She was duller than himself, and consequently did not find out that he was so, and had lived in that figure almost forty years, without meddling in any affairs of the Electorate.’

She lost no time in improving her opportunities in the English Court. Two years after her arrival, ‘the Maypole’ was, by reason of her want of virtue, created Baroness of Dundalk,

Marchioness of Dungannon, and Duchess of Munster; the sister island having been selected to have the honour of furnishing this delightful person with a triple title. But with these she was by no means satisfied; they were only Irish, and therefore by no means good enough for her; she was not an English peeress, and nothing less than that would satisfy her ambition. The amicable and new-made duchess stormed, and led the king a pretty dance; she cursed in her native tongue, and poured out the vials of her wrath upon Lord Townshend, whom she blamed for debarring her from the coveted honours.

My lord, who was the Secretary of State, fearing her influence and desiring her favour, exerted himself in behalf of her wishes. Some time afterwards, when the king invested him with the Order of the Garter, it was whispered that she had suggested this act to His Majesty, evidently thinking that one good turn deserved another, and in this way even ministers played into her hands. However, with the king, this woman was all-powerful, and notwithstanding public ridicule, and the indignation of the peers, rather than incur His

Majesty's displeasure, the ministry created her Baroness of Glastonbury, Countess of Feversham, and Duchess of Kendal, with an income of four thousand a year on the Irish Establishment. In Hanover the news was received with some astonishment. From there a correspondent writes to Lady Cowper: 'I cannot express the surprise we are in here at Mademoiselle Schulenburg being naturalised and made an English duchess. Madame Kilmansegge writes here that she is very unwilling to give place to the new duchess; therefore she will petition Parliament to be naturalised, that she may have a title equal to the other.'

The duchess was by-and-by made Princess of Eberstein, and finally she aspired to a left-handed marriage with the amorous old king. The rumour of this last piece of absurdity gained ground during His Majesty's life, and in a manuscript letter written in 1746 to Dr. Birch, the writer, the Rev. Henry Etough, says, 'the late king was expensive and vain in his amours. He had Kilmansegge and Platen besides Kendal, to whom it is supposed the late Archbishop of York married him.' In an appendix to the second volume

of the memoirs of the last ten years of the reign of George II., it is stated of George I. that he married the Duchess of Kendal with his left hand. There was certainly some rumour of this marriage, and Swift made a bitter epigram on the perplexity which it occasioned the ministers. This was afterwards found amongst the dean's papers, with these words written on the back, 'A wicked, treasonable libel. I wish I knew the author that I might hang him.' The Archbishop of York, who was declared to have performed the ceremony, was Dr. Lancelot Blackburn, of whom Horace Walpole speaks as 'the jolly old archbishop, who had all the manners of a man of quality, though he had been a buccaneer, and was a clergyman, who retained nothing of his first profession except his seraglio.' In 1716 he was made Bishop of Exeter, and eight years later was promoted to the See of York.

It was Schulenburg's good will to be seen on Sundays at the chief Lutheran chapels, to which she repaired seven times, and where she communicated publicly to the edification of large congregations. One clergyman had the courage

to refuse administering the sacrament to her, but she easily found others whose scruples were not so nice, and whose ideas of advancement were not so limited, for the Schulenburg had a good finger in the church, and could boast of having made many bishops, for trifling considerations. It was a constant complaint of hers that she did not know how to amuse the king in his idle hours, and probably her genius prompted her to cut out paper figures as one resource against monotony; it is certainly amusing to see how closely she watched His Majesty. The king was in the habit (after a day's shooting in Richmond) of dining with Sir Robert Walpole, whom the duchess hated; after dinner His Majesty frequently got communicative and jovial over strong glasses of punch, which he dearly loved, and which his minister skilfully mixed for him. Schulenburg by no means liked this, for she feared that in such moments the king would babble concerning her political intrigues by which she sought to overthrow the ministers, and secretly told some of the German barons who accompanied His Majesty to check the king from indulging too freely in his favourite

stimulant, which, true to her commands, they strove to do on one occasion with much promptitude, but, alas! with little address, whereon the king became outraged, and, in the freest of language, cursed them, called them the ugliest of names, and consigned them to quarters supposed to be uncomfortably warm.

With Schulenburg came over from Hanover a younger addition of her most ugly self, whom she introduced as her niece, but who was well known, from her likeness to George I. among other reasons, to be her daughter. This young lady was afterwards created Baroness of Aldborough and Countess of Walsingham, and married the courtly Earl of Chesterfield.

Another of the principal ladies who found favour in the royal eye was Madame Kilmansegge, whom Lord Chesterfield wittily spoke of in connection with Madame Schulenburg, Duchess of Kendal, as ‘two considerable samples of the king’s bad taste and good stomach.’ She had tired very quickly of the good merchant of Hamburg who had given her his name, and, having the offer which George Lewis made her in view, went back to him. When her mother,

the vile Madame Platen, who died a countess, left this world, she bequeathed her daughter the snug sum of £40,000, all of which she had saved out of what her lover, Ernest Augustus, George I.'s father, had given her, and from the bribes she had received for her interest concerning appointments and promotions in the Hanoverian Court and army. But this sum was a mere trifle to Madame Kilmansegge, who loved pleasure greatly, and knew no greater delight than in squandering the fortune left her; moreover, she was the mistress of her prince, and as such she could never lack for wealth.

When the Prince became king, she at once made up her mind to accompany her royal master to England—a decision on her part which His Majesty accepted with gratitude, as the Schulenburg had refused him. However, she found considerable difficulty in putting her resolution into execution. She had squandered all her fortune, and from reckless extravagance had run deeply into debt, which George Lewis stoutly refused to pay. Her numerous creditors, not having much faith in her honour, believing that, if she was once beyond their reach, they

would never again have the happiness of seeing either Kilmansegge or her money, and catching wind of the rumour that she was about to depart for England with the king, became alarmed, watchful, and determined not to let her escape. For Kilmansegge this was a desperate crisis. If she remained behind, she might lose the royal favour for ever, for kings, alas, are seldom constant, and she had no means of paying the bills which hemmed her in on all sides. Then, on the other hand, if she was but once in England, she was quite safe from the reach of vulgar creditors—that country, she had heard, was wealthy. As the king's mistress in a powerful court, she would be certain to reap a golden harvest.

With such considerations before her mental gaze, Madame Kilmansegge became desperate. Taking her royal lover into her confidence, she told him he must leave Hanover before her, in order to baffle the sharp-witted creditors, who by this manœuvre would believe that she had abandoned her idea of accompanying him to England; then she would don a disguise, and in an unpretentious post-chaise would escape

from the city ; which design she cleverly effected, and reached Holland in time to accompany the king to England. By some strange fate, it seemed that the house of Platen was destined to furnish the house of Hanover with mistresses. Kilmansegge's mother, the Countess Platen, had been mistress to George I.'s father, and had ruled that prince for years. Kilmansegge, *née* Platen, was the king's mistress till her death, and her sister-in-law, Madame Platen the younger, shared a like infamy. Madame Kilmansegge was enormously stout, and singularly unwieldy in person, and when she first came to England she was hailed as the 'Elephant and Castle,' a designation she long retained. She was over forty years old when she arrived in these happy isles as one of the king's retinue, and was saluted by jeers and ridicule, which rather alarmed her, not being used to such demonstrations in the despotic Hanoverian Court, where everything belonging to the prince was held as sacred ; but the sycophancy of those who gathered round the new king soon set her mind at ease.

Horace Walpole has given a racy description

of the personal charms which enamoured the king that is well worth noting. He remembered seeing her at his mother's, and was 'terrified at her enormous figure, which was as corpulent and ample as the Duchess of Kendal was long and emaciated. Two fierce, black eyes, large and rolling beneath two lofty arched eyebrows; two acres of cheek spread with crimson; an ocean of neck that overflowed, and was not distinguished from the lower part of her body, and no part restrained by stays; no wonder that a child dreaded such an ogress.'

But Kilmansegge was by no means as heavy in mind as she was in person; she had what was called a very pretty wit, was vivacious, and considered a brilliant conversationalist when in those days conversation was regarded as an art, and took pains to make herself as charming as possible to all with whom she came in contact. Probably in consideration of these gifts, the king forgot, if he was ever conscious of it, the unsightliness of her appearance, for George never cared to talk much, but was fond of hearing others converse, especially if there was humour in their words.

When Kilmansegge came to England, her notions regarding expenditure underwent a considerable change. She now became as saving of English money as she had been lavish of Hanoverian coin, and, during the first years of her stay, the presents made her by those who wished to gain the royal ear were numerous and magnificent, all of which she accepted with a grace that was charming and a delight that was great.

Whilst the royal sun shone on her she made hay, and saved a considerable sum. She was fond of social gaiety, and gave suppers and other entertainments to which the king and the ladies of the court were frequently bidden, and to one of these Pope writes to Teresa and Martha Blount that he had the 'honour to be invited and the grace to stay away.'

Though time had traced some wrinkles on her brow, and art had unskillfully placed carmine on her cheeks, yet Kilmansegge was as pleasure-loving as in her early youth, and not only smiled upon the old monarch, but likewise on some of the courtiers who were sometimes silly, and sometimes wily enough to make love to her.

Among these was Lord Halifax, who, much desiring the post of Lord of the Treasury under the new government, undertook, as the best means of gaining her favour, to provide her with a liberal purse and a handsome lover in the person of Mr. Methuen.

This gentleman, who has been described by Swift as 'a profligate rogue without religion or morals, yet cunning enough,' and a remarkably handsome man, with an interesting reputation for gallantry, made love to this woman with satisfaction to her and his patron, and so well did the noble lord's scheme succeed, and so grateful was Kilmansegge, that he soon gained the office he desired. Rather a singular way of suing for such a boon.

She was clever, cunning, and subtle, though she described herself in writing to Lady Sundon as 'a dull and silly woman from whom her ladyship cannot expect a fine letter.' Her whole life gave contradiction to this humble estimate of herself, which was never believed by the Princess of Wales, who used to say of her that 'she never stuck a pin into her gown without a design.' She was certainly well able to employ

her wiles for gain in this intriguing Court.

Between Schulenburg and Kilmansegge there was bitter detestation, and, when the former was naturalized as an English subject and created duchess, the indignation of the latter rose to a high pitch. She declared she should receive equal honours. But the new duchess seems to have thwarted her in these ambitious designs, for it was only on the death of Monsieur Kilmansegge, the Hamburg merchant, in 1721, that his faithless spouse was raised to the peerage as Countess of Leinster, and a year afterward as Baroness of Brentford and Countess of Darlington in the peerage of England. The flatterers of each of these vile and hideous women formed themselves into two parties, who were, we are told, more violent than the Whigs and Tories.

The Countess bore the king a daughter, named Mary Sophia Charlotte, for whom was found some scrapings from the royal purse, and who was married to Viscount Howe. Horace Walpole says, 'Lady Howe was never publicly acknowledged as the king's daughter; but Princess Amelia treated her daughter, Mrs.

Howe, upon that footing, and one evening, when I was present, gave her a ring with a small portrait of George I., with a crown of diamonds.'

When the king went to the play-house or the opera—for he had an ear for music—it was a droll sight to see His Majesty carried in his royal sedan chair, which he always used as a conveyance unless when he went to open Parliament, when he rode in a coach drawn by eight horses. Six footmen sedately walked before his chair, and six Yeomen of the Guards at each side of it; and the procession was brought up by his two old, ugly sultanas in their chairs, carried by servants bearing the royal livery; the whole procession making a pretty show, at which not only London, but Europe laughed. When they got into the theatre, these women, decked out in great finery and diamonds, sat side by side in front of the royal box, hating each other with a good, deep-hearted detestation, whilst behind them sat a corpulent little old man in a brown wig, who constantly took snuff, and chuckled with laughter when the Countess uttered anything that savoured of wit, or when some pas-

sage in the play tickled his coarse fancy. This little old man was King George.

Along with these mistresses, a whole host of Germans came over with the monarch to England, who were afterwards appointed to various offices about the Court; and this detachment was supplemented by the two Turks, named Mustapha and Mahomet, whom the king had taken prisoner when he served in the Imperial army, and with whose society he could not afford to dispense.

Reference is made to them in 'La Correspondance Secrete du Comte du Broglio.' 'The king has no predilection for the English nation,' says the Count, 'and never receives in private any English of either sex: none even of his principal officers are admitted to his chamber in the morning to dress him, nor in the evening to undress him. These offices are performed by the Turks, who are his *valets-de-chambre*, and who give him everything he wants in private.'

Another of George's mistresses whom he left behind was Madame Platen, wife to his minister, and sister-in-law to Madame Kilmansegge.

She was considered the handsomest woman in the Hanoverian Court, but for long her charms were passed over, seemingly unnoticed by the Elector; a proceeding on his part with which she was by no means satisfied. That he should admire Schulenburg and Kilmansegge and neglect her, was insufferable. But, being a woman of determination, if not of virtue, she resolved to change this state of affairs; and one day requested a private audience of the Prince. When they were alone, she burst into tears, which probably she had discovered became her, and begged to know why it was that His Electoral Highness could behave so cruelly to her. George Lewis was a dull man at best, and declared with surprise he had never been unkind to her; that he had always admired and respected her. This latter-mentioned feeling on his part was not, however, what she desired.

'If you do admire me,' she said, 'why is it that you scarcely honour me with a visit, whilst so much of your time is devoted to Madame Schulenburg?'

Upon this hint the Prince so frequently visited Madame Platen, that her husband objected to

his attentions, and parted from his wife. Some time afterwards Mr. Craggs, then a young man, arrived at the Hanoverian Court, who played some part in her history. 'It is true,' said Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in speaking of him, 'there appeared a heat and want of judgment in all his words and actions, which did not make him very valuable in the eyes of cool judges, but Madame Platen was not of that number. His youth and fire made him appear a conquest worthy her charms, and her charms made her appear very well worthy his passionate addresses. Two people so well disposed towards each other were very soon in the closest engagement; and the first proof Madame Platen gave him of her affection was introducing him to the favour of the Elector, who took it on her word that he was a young man of extraordinary merit, and he named him for Cofferer at his first accession to the crown of England, and I believe it was the only place that he then disposed of from any inclination of his own. This proof of Madame Platen's favour hindered her coming hither.'

However, though this lady did not form part

of the king's establishment in England, she retained her apartments in the Hanoverian palace, and was always ready to receive her lord and master whenever he made his frequent journeys to his beloved Electorate.

CHAPTER V.

Avarice of the Royal Mistresses and Favourites—Count Broglio's Letters to the French Court—The King's Answer—Robethon and Bothmar—Mustapha and Mahomet—The King's View of his New Possessions—Public Ridicule—The Civil List—Economy of the Hanoverian Court—Public Indignation and its Expression—The Mob and its Conduct—Unpopularity of the Germans—Club formed to Protect the King from Insult—Wreck of a Mug-house—Attempt to Shoot the Prince and King—Rebellion in Scotland.

THE king's mistresses strove to enrich themselves by every foul means as quickly as possible, and so great and open a trade did they ply in the sale of preferments, civil and ecclesiastical, which His Majesty could bestow independently of his ministers, that they employed brokers to negotiate between them and those seeking their aid. The Rev. Henry Etough,

in a letter written not long after His Majesty's death, says, in speaking of the unscrupulous conduct of the royal mistresses: 'Two of these most impudently and notoriously, by their brokers, took money for all sorts of places. So did Bernstorff, Bothmar, and Robethon. The embroils thus occasioned are well remembered.' Ministers and courtiers, clergymen and lawyers, opened their purse-strings to them as the only means by which advancement could be obtained. The managers of the infamous South Sea Bubble, which filled the nation first with delirium and then with woe, gave these shameless women the sum of £30,000 to promote their plans; this handsome sum being divided between them and their daughters. This scheme was afterwards denounced by a committee of the House of Commons as 'a train of the deepest villainy and fraud with which hell ever contrived to ruin a nation.' The duchess, however, cared very little for the ruin of nations so long as her pocket filled quickly with money; nor did she improve with time. In 1724, the patent for supplying Ireland with farthings and halfpence to the value of

£108,000, against which Swift protested, was granted through her influence, on the understanding that she was to receive a handsome share of the profits. When this infamous design had to be abandoned, owing to the grand juries refusing to find true bills, Wood, to whom the patent had been granted, received by way of compensation a pension of £3,000 for eight years, a share of which she received.

From Viscount Bolingbroke, who had fled from England on being charged with favouring the Stuart cause, her grace obtained £11,000 for using her influence over the king for the purpose of granting his complete restoration after nine years of exile. No wonder that Sir Robert Walpole complained that 'her interest did everything, that she was in effect as much Queen of England as ever any was.' Of course there were many comparatively small sums which the duchess quietly put in her pocket, and among others was one from Sir Richard Child, who sighed for the honours of a peerage, which she promised and obtained for him for a consideration. Her thirst for gold, however, seemed insatiable; her constant cry was 'give,

give,' and those who crowded her apartments in St. James's Palace were always ready to minister to her greed. Assuredly she was the leading spirit of that 'flight of hungry Hanoverians' which Mahon speaks of as 'like so many famished vultures that fell with keen and bended talons on the fruitful soil of England.' Her greatest prize has, however, yet to be mentioned. When Charles Seymour, 'the proud Duke of Somerset,' resigned his appointment of Master of the Horse, the duchess had the audacity to tell the king that, instead of naming a successor, he must leave the post vacant and give the salary to her; a command which her old lover quietly obeyed. The profits of this appointment amounted to £7,500 a year.

Prominent among those who flocked about her seeking her patronage was Count Broglio, a wily ambassador and flattering, subtle courtier. He writes to his master the King of France, 'As the Duchess of Kendal seemed to express a desire to see me often, I have been very attentive to her; being convinced that it is highly essential to the advantage of your Majesty's service to be on good terms with her.'

And again he says—

‘The king visits her every afternoon from five to eight, and it is there that she endeavours to penetrate the sentiments of His Britannic Majesty, for the purpose of consulting the three ministers, and pursuing the measures which may be thought necessary for accomplishing their designs. She sent me word that she was desirous of my friendship, and that I would place confidence in her. I assured her that I would do everything in my power to merit her esteem and friendship. I am convinced that she may be advantageously employed in promoting your Majesty’s service, and that it will be necessary to employ her; though I will not trust her further than is necessary.’

His Majesty writes back :

‘You will neglect nothing to acquire a share of her confidence, from a conviction that nothing can be more conducive to my interest. There is, however, a manner of giving additional value to the marks of confidence you bestow on her in private, by avoiding in public all appearances which might seem too pointed, by which means you will avoid falling into the inconvenience of

being suspected by those who are not friendly to the duchess; at the same time that a kind of mysteriousness in public, on the subject of your confidence, will give rise to a firm belief of your having formed a friendship mutually sincere.'

The 'marks of confidence' bestowed on her in private for the maintenance of the union between the two countries must have been pretty considerable. But the French king was not the only foreign power which sought to keep this notorious woman in its favour. The Emperor of Austria, who was desirous that King George should renew the connection between England and Austria, kept up a secret correspondence with her.

Madame Kilmansegge was equally rapacious, but her power over the king was not so great, and her profits were consequently limited. Occasionally she managed to secure a prize, such as the sum of £500 from Mr. Chetwynd, for obtaining him an appointment as one of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations on the Board of Trade, with the additional sum of £200 per annum as long as he held it, which was for fourteen years. This system of robbery, how-

ever, did not end with the ladies. 'George I.,' we read in the memoirs of Horace Walpole, 'had imported a little body-guard of Hanoverians who acted as a sort of secret council to the great prejudice of every interest in the country, except such as found its way into their pockets.' These gentlemen, who had considerable influence over the king, and attempted to rule Great Britain through him, were Baron Goritz, Count Bernstorff, who has been described as 'avaricious, artful, and designing,' Mr. Robethon, and Baron Bothmar. Their insolence, their desire of creating dissension between the king and his English ministers, and, above all, their avarice, rendered them almost insufferable.

'Robethon's impertinence is so notorious,' wrote Sir Robert Walpole to Secretary Stanhope, 'that we must depend upon it he does all the mischief he possibly can,' and Lord Townshend gives testimony to the character of another of the favourites in these words: 'Bothmar has every day some infamous project or other on foot to get money, and his disappointments in these particulars are what he cannot bear, having nothing in his view but raising a

vast estate to himself; and, therefore, he will never be satisfied till he has got the Ministry and Treasury into such hands as will satisfy his avarice at the expense of the king's credit, interest, and service.' Sure of the king's favour, these men swaggered through the court, and, without the slightest concealment or shame, offered their interests to the highest bidders. Robethon, a few months after his master came to the throne, procured from him the grant of Clerk of the Parliament, for anybody he would name when death had removed the present holder of that appointment. This Robethon sold to Spencer Cowper, Member of Parliament for Truro, for the sum of £1,800. Bernstorff, who was 'beloved by the king,' and Bothmar, aspired to the peerage, but His Majesty, though he had elevated his two mistresses to that honour, declined to fall in with the views of these wily gentlemen, probably fearing to tax the forbearance of Parliament too much.

Even His Majesty's two Turkish slaves, Mustapha and Mahomet, were not without their influence over the king, and advanced so far in the royal favour as to have had their portraits

painted by the king's command, which were afterwards hung above the great staircase in Kensington Palace. They followed the example set them by the king's favourites, and realised considerable sums by retaining to themselves the right to dispose of the minor offices of the royal household. Archdeacon Coxe, accounting for the extraordinary rapacity of the Germans, says: 'These mistresses, ministers, and favourites, coming from a poor Electorate, considered England as a land of promise, and at the same time so precarious a possession that they endeavoured to enrich themselves with all possible speed.'

At first the new king was regarded with ridicule by the subjects surrounding him, but this feeling soon grew to indignation at the vast sums which these favourites were allowed to levy on anyone seeking position or promotion. When Sir Robert Walpole, on behalf of the ministry, reasoned with His Majesty on the subject, George Lewis, used to despotism and unused to interference with his royal will, was indignant, and burst out with the coarse reply, 'I suppose you also are paid for your recommendations.'

He knew well the state of wholesale bribery and corruption that went on around him, and aided it by playing into the hands, and smiling placidly on the work of his minions. He had benefited richly by the change, and was pleased that his friends should do so likewise. The amount of the Civil List which he enjoyed was £700,000 a year, voted by the House of Commons, and a clause was inserted in the bill for the payment of £65,000 due to the Hanoverian troops in the pay of England, but withheld up to the time of George's accession by the Court, because in 1712 they had refused to join the Duke of Ormond. It was his habit to regularly receive a thousand pounds weekly; 'the remainder of his revenue, amounting to £600,000 per annum,' Count Broglio says, 'was remitted every month to his treasurer.' From the Royal Exchange Assurance Company he received the sum of £300,000, and from the London Assurance Companies £300,000 more; yet a year before his death the sum of one million sterling towards the payment of his debts was voted to him by the nation!

When in his little Electorate, his expenditure

had never been liberal, and his establishment was conducted on economical principles. Speaking of the monarch's Hanoverian life, Toland says: 'I need give you no more particular proof of his frugality in laying out the public money than that all the expenses of the Court, as to eating, drinking, fire, candles, and the like, are duly paid every Saturday night. The officers of the army receive their pay every month, and all the Civil List are cleared every half year.' Though this rigidity and economy of conduct practised in Hanover would have done justice to any housekeeper, his principles strangely altered in England, where his liberality with English money was regal. As an instance of this, it may be mentioned that Lady Suffolk said, when Queen Caroline, wife of George II., came to the throne, she found but one pearl necklace of all Queen Anne's jewels, 'as the new king had instantly distributed what he found amongst his German favourites.' His generosity, indeed, confined itself to these, and was rarely extended to his English subjects. 'This is a strange country,' he said once, when a slight demand was made on his purse. 'The first

morning after my arrival at St. James's, I looked out of a window and saw a park, with walks and a canal, which they told me were mine. The next day Lord Chetwynd, the ranger of *my* park, sent me a brace of fine carp out of *my* canal, and I was told I must give five guineas to Lord Chetwynd's man for bringing *my own* carp out of *my own* canal in *my own* park.'

Among the Germans who came over with the king was one whose honesty caused His Majesty some amusement. This anomaly was none other than the royal cook, who was so distressed at the limitless expenditure that went on in the kitchen at St. James's that he wished to resign his place, and desired permission to go home. This cook was a favourite of the king, who sent for and asked him his reasons for wishing to leave. When the man told him it was because of the unaccustomed waste, His Majesty laughed right merrily. 'Never mind,' he answered, 'my present revenues will bear the expense. Do you rob like the rest; and be sure you take enough.'

No wonder that Count Broglio wrote to the French king of this monarch, 'He rather con-

siders England a temporary possession, to be made the most of while it lasts, than as a perpetual inheritance to himself and family.' To this statement the king's acts during his reign bear strong testimony. How could he tell that the Government might not sicken and tire of him any day, and bring back the rightful heir to the throne; or that the descendants of the people who had brought King Charles to the block would not rise up, and drive him and his hideous mistresses, and his meddlesome, grasping counts and barons, and his Turkish slaves back to the little Electorate once more. So, whilst he and his favourites could, they filled their pockets with English gold, and sent money home to their poor relations, who fattened on this country likewise, and profited by the plundering of this nation.

The indignation which the shameless proceedings of the king and his foreigners caused amongst the English courtiers was not long in spreading to the general public, and was finally taken up by the mob. The crowd which had shouted so lustily for the king on the day of his entry, lost much of its loyal en-

thusiasm when he went to be crowned at Westminster Abbey. On the celebration of his birthday, the 28th of May, when he had reigned about eight months, public opinion regarding the monarch had so changed that the mob smashed all the windows in the city that had illuminated to do him honour, including those of my Lord Mayor: and when the anniversary of King Charles's restoration came round, bonfires were lighted, the city was illuminated, and there were signs of general rejoicing.

A poor half-witted schoolmaster seems to have been selected as the victim of this occasion; the demagogue of the night and martyr of the hour mounted on a beer-barrel, which he had probably helped to empty, and told the crowd which gathered around that King George had no claim to the throne, but was a usurper. This utterer of dangerous sedition was seized on, and clapped into Newgate on a charge of high treason, and had afterwards the privilege of sharing that degree of martyrdom which gloriously awards one who is publicly whipped.

The *Flying Post*, of July 16, 1715, speaking

of a man, who followed a trade historically democratic, that had been arrested as the leader of a town riot on this anniversary, says :

‘That it is very observable that, on His Majesty’s birthday, the cobbler put on very close mourning, and on the restoration day appeared in colours, with a laced hat. In the meantime, it is expected that the cobbler’s merit will be so much taken notice of that we shall soon hear of his translation from Highgate to Newgate.’

Another trifle light as air, which, at the same time, shows which way public opinion blew, occurred on the king’s birthday. As a mark of royal favour, the first regiment of Foot Guards were given new clothes, but the shirts which fell to their lot were of so poor and coarse a material that the soldiers considered themselves hardly treated, and cried out against them. In some cases the men took private opportunities of flinging these garments which so offended them into the yardway of St. James’s Palace ; thus throwing them, as it were, in the king’s face. Others of them dared to show their dissatisfaction more openly ; and once,

when a detachment of them were marching through the city to relieve guard at the Tower, they boldly pulled out their under-garments, and said to the good citizens, 'See our Hanoverian shirts.'

The episcopal clergy of Scotland refused to pray for the king's welfare, and, to mark his sense of the probable loss he might sustain from such lack of petitions on his behalf, His Majesty ordered a decree to be issued compelling them on punishment to quit their offices, and in some cases to leave their country. The pamphlets and ballads which in those days flooded the town on every possible occasion were not slow to ventilate public opinion regarding the king and his favourites. One of them more daring than the others declared,

'A petty thief is only rogue and fool
That hangs by law. Rob but enough and rule,
Steal but the crown, and you're above the law.'

A ballad which had great popularity was styled 'A Dialogue between the old black horse at Charing Cross and the new one with a figure on it in Hanover Square,' and was sung to the tune of 'The Abbot of Canterbury.'

Only some verses of it can be given.

‘ In London late happen’d a pleasant discourse
‘ Twixt an old English nagg and a Hanover horse ;
No wonder, my friends, if plain English they speak,
For in old Æsop’s time horses spoke heathen Greek.

Derry, Derry Down.

‘ King Charles’s black nagg, being tired of the town,
From fair Charing Cross one evening stole down,
And, trotting along t’wards the fields for fresh air,
He spy’d a strange beast up in Hanover Square.

Derry, Derry Down.

‘ Marching up, he most civilly greeted the steed,
But soon found he was not of true English breed,
And the rider he thought a much more awkward thing,
For he look’d like a lout, and was dressed like a king.

Derry, Derry Down.

‘ The Charing Cross nagg thus began : Brother Pad,
‘ Tis enough, sure, to make any mortal horse mad
To see such a rider bestride a poor horse ;
Were you hag-ridden, sure you’d scarce be no worse.

Derry, Derry Down.

‘ Quoth the poor harmless beast, My hard lot I must bear,
And I but the lot of these three kingdoms share ;
For this wretch on my back has a proverb on’s side,
Set a beggar on horseback, to the devil he’ll ride.

Derry, Derry Down.

‘ You seem to have brought him full many a long mile,
But Englishmen, sure, will ne’er think it worth while
For this creature to rule them, to send very far,
When my good old master they never would bear.

Derry, Derry Down.

‘ We came from a poor little town called Hanover,
But, oh ! had you seen us before we came over,
You’d say times mended with me and this stupid thief,
Since I’ve eat good oats and his worship good beef.

Derry, Derry Down.

‘ Says Charles’s black nagg, Be ruled by me,
To Tyburn you now, being on the right way,
There carry him thither, and there let him swing,
Or else pack him home like a dog in a string.

Derry, Derry Down.’

To turn to prose, we find that *Mist’s Journal* contained an article that referred to the ladies King George had honoured with his favour in these harsh words: ‘ We are ruined by trulls, nay, what is more, by old ugly trulls, such as could not find entertainment in the most hospitable hundreds of Old Drury.’ This piece of impertinence offered to his sacred majesty’s favourites was so offensive to the king that it was made a subject of parliamentary debate ; and Mist was censured, fined, and kept in durance vile. When His Majesty and his favourites went abroad, the crowd was bold enough to make merry at the old man in his sedan-chair, followed by his mistresses. Moreover, it imitated the Hanoverian gentlemen, told them

some plain truths, called them ugly names, and hinted its desire that they should speedily return from whence they came.

One day, when the king's mistresses were driving through the streets, the crowd hissed and shouted at them, and for once their natural imperturbation was disturbed. One of them put her head out of the coach-window and said, in a conciliating tone, 'Good peoples, why do you abuse us? we come for your goods.' 'Yes, damn you,' answered an honest Britisher, 'and for our chattels too.' The detestation of these foreigners increased daily amongst the people. Baron Pollnitz, writing of the English, says: 'Their hatred to the Germans is of no older date than that of the reign of the Elector of Hanover; for till then the English looked upon us as if they neither loved nor envied us; but now they have a notion that the money of England goes over to Germany, and seem to think that we had no coin till they called the House of Hanover to govern them.'

But it was not only in Court but in town that foreigners began to flourish under the Hanoverian rule, so much so that in the reign of George

II. English trade and tradesmanship was injured by the number of them which had taken up their residence in London; and a committee of aldermen and commoners found it necessary to press for the licensing of foreigners under certain restrictions.

The mob at last became so personal in its remarks towards the king and his favourites whenever he or they were seen abroad that some loyal gentlemen, who were much incensed by this treatment, formed themselves into companies in order to protect His Majesty and the foreign portion of his Court from being pelted with ugly words when passing through the city.* It was the duty of the members of these companies to meet at certain ale-houses where they kept a goodly number of stout oaken cudgels, destined to beat or terrify the unruly mob when it dared to enjoy the luxury of freedom of speech. These places of assembly were

* The city rabble on most of the public festivals (especially those of the king's birthday, accession to the crown, and coronation) assembled in a tumultuous manner; and with the most amazing assurance, by expressions and representations, publicly reflected on and dishonoured the king.—ALLEN'S *History and Antiquities of London*, vol. ii, p. 11.

called Mug-Houses because the ale supplied by them was drunk in mugs. The fact of the interference of the members of the companies on days when His Majesty went abroad was resented by the crowd, which threatened destruction to all Mug-Houses. On one memorable occasion indeed the mob proceeded to put its promised vengeance into execution, and attacked a Mug-House in Salisbury Court, commencing by tearing down the sign and smashing the windows. One Martin Reade, the landlord, was a valiant man, who, with his firelock in his hand, prepared to defend himself and his castle. In the encounter which followed he shot one of the rioters through the body, who, as a consequence, fell dead. News of the riot reaching Whitehall, a detachment of Guards came out with good will to the rescue, when those who ran away lived to fight another day, and those who did not were taken to the lock-up.

This feeling of disloyalty did not abate for many years. On the second celebration in England of the anniversary of the king's birthday, oak branches, the badge of the Stuarts, were generally and publicly worn, and two soldiers, who

were found guilty of this crime, were whipped almost to death.

In 1716 an attempt was made to shoot the Prince of Wales, concerning which Chancellor Hardwick writes to a friend, 'To-morrow's print will, I suppose, bring you the story of the sentinels being shot at the play-house last night, whilst the prince was there, as soon as this letter. The person who did it proves to be one Freeman who has been known about town as a crazed man, which, in the opinion of most people, frees the affair from any suspicion of a plot. I happened to be in the pit when it was done, and never saw so much confusion in a public assembly in my life as there was on this occasion. The affrighted people called "Fire!" those that had more presence of mind "A quarrel;" but very few knew what it really was. The ladies were ready to climb over the boxes, and a duchess might have been had for a little protection. Even Bajazet and Tamerlane descended from their characters to entreat the audience to sit still, and could hardly prevail; but at last the play proceeded. The prince kept his seat without any appearance of being moved.'

Two years later on, a youth named James Shepherd shot at His Majesty. He gloried in the act, said if his life were spared he would do the same again, and died declaring James Stuart the only king.

To this discontent at home was added the fear and disturbance caused by the rebellion in Scotland in 1715, which ended in defeat, and, for some of the leaders, in decapitation on Tower Hill.

CHAPTER VI.

The Court in Queen Anne's Reign—Changes under George I.—Drawing-rooms at St. James's—Some Courtiers—The King's Daughter, Melesina—Lord Lincoln's Freedom with the King—The Duchess of Shrewsbury's 'Extraordinary Discourse'—The German Beauties and Lady Deloraine—Madame Tron and Madame Robethon—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—How she became a Toast—The Princess of Wales—The Duchess of Bolton's slips of the Tongue—The King's love for Richmond and Hampton Court—The Drury Lane Company plays there—Royal Diversions.

DURING the reign of Queen Anne, who was zealous and religious, the Court of St. James's had been rather dull and decent. Her Majesty's character had been unimpeachable; she liberally patronised the church; expended but little money on ceremonies or favourites (with the exception of the ungrateful Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough), and was at once

frugal, generous, and simple in her habits. Though occasionally she delighted in seeing her drawing-rooms crowded, and was exacting in all points concerning etiquette, the rights of precedent, and even the dresses of her courtiers, yet on such occasions she had little to say, and nothing that was wise or witty, and her levees were apt to be wearisome.

Dean Swift, who figures at St. James's under the reign of three sovereigns, gives us an etching of one of Queen Anne's Court receptions. 'The Queen looked at us with her fan in her mouth, and once a minute said about three words to some that were nearest her; and then she was told dinner was ready, and went out,' says the Dean. In fact a court reigned over by a dull queen, and an ambitious, intolerant, and jealous duchess, was by no means a lively place; and in such an atmosphere dissipation perished, amorous intrigues were almost unknown, and gaiety met with but small encouragement. But now, with the arrival of a new king, the history of whose amours had tickled the ears of Europe with pleasant scandals, and of a Prince of Wales whose youth must prove

a warrant for his gaiety, it was expected that a different order of things would soon be established at the Court of St. James's; an expectation that was by no means doomed to disappointment. George Augustus, Prince of Wales, came to England with feelings very different from his father. He was elated with his new dignity as heir to the British throne, and filled with hopes of power and pleasure, which he did not care to conceal. He was still at an age when the sweets of life have not begun to satiate, and its joys have yet a fulness perhaps even more gratifying than the first flavour of freshness.

When the king was established, a new regime was begun. The doors of St. James's were thrown open to all who brought with them beauty, chivalry, wit, or learning, and though His Majesty and the Prince cared little for these latter recommendations in comparison with the former, yet it was an age when wit had become a profession, and learning fashionable; and those who possessed both were to be found in numbers at the drawing-rooms of St. James's. The walls of the old palace echoed with laughter

as in the days of the graceful, thoughtless, and merry monarch, and none the less now as then, that it did not always arise from the purest sources. The language used in the royal drawing-rooms was none too courtly ; and often times not all decent. The fine ladies of the Court could be coarse, and those fine gentlemen very loose of tongue, according to the practice of the age, in conversing with each other.

In the great drawing-room of St. James's, consisting of three saloons adorned under the directions of her late majesty, and hung with large canvases by Vandyck, savants and gallants, ministers and courtesans, made their bow before royalty, under whose very nose intrigues were carried on, and *bon-mots* whispered from behind the shelter of protecting fans to the ears of courtiers, who chuckled and shook their ponderous wigs from force of hilarity, but never blushed.

All the homage of gold, and love, and flattery, and the dignities which fine sounding titles can confer, were lavished on women witty of speech, fair of face, but frail of soul.

‘Queen Sarah,’ proud and imperious, as in the

days when the late queen had let her rule the kingdom, is here. Her husband has returned in triumph, and the wily woman is scheming again for an ascendancy in the royal household ; she is closely watching that rough, good-humoured-looking man opposite, whose face is deeply marked by small-pox, and who looks far more like a country squire than a courtier ; he is talking very loudly, and his voice is full and mellow, and when he laughs (as he does pretty often, as freely as if he were not in the presence of royalty) his face lights up until its expression becomes handsome.

That man is Sir Robert Walpole, and the Duchess of Marlborough hates him, and says the bitterest things she can concerning him ; but as her hate and bitterness are pretty well divided over her friends, acquaintances, and all the world surrounding her, the minister little heeds the brunt of her fury. Sir Robert is talking to Mr. Addison, who, for all the fine language of which he is master, when called on to write out the formal news of the late queen's death, could find no words suitable to his mind for the occasion, and, after destroy-

ing several copies of a draft, was obliged to call in his clerk, who made the plain statement with as few words and as little ceremony as were really needful.

Addison had taken office in order that he might be more suited to become the husband of my Lady Warwick, who fell in love with and married him, and this caused Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to remark that 'such a post as secretary and such a wife as the Countess do not seem to be in prudence eligible for a man that is asthmatic, and that she (Lady Mary) should live to see the day when he would be heartily glad to resign both.'

As Walpole now listens to the refined scholar, his eyes turn watchfully round the room, not altogether as heedlessly as his wife might desire, on the fair courtiers. The great minister has the reputation for being a gallant man, and even now there are some gossips in the room who whisper that a charming woman loves him, 'not wisely but too well' for the sake of her reputation. Near Sir Robert is young Philip Stanhope, afterwards the noble Earl of Chesterfield, an elegant and polished writer of letters, one of

the ugliest and most graceful men at court, rough of feature, broad of back, and with a head which a wit of the time said made him look like a 'stunted giant.'

Philip Stanhope is a wit, a scholar, and a beau; his conversation is full of classical learning, his attitudes have a courtly bearing, and he is already setting up for a man of high attainments—a character afterwards pretty generally allotted him, although George II. said in one of his unamiable moods: 'Chesterfield is a little tea-table scoundrel, that tells little womanish lies to make quarrels in families, and tries to make women lose their reputations, and make their husbands beat them, without any object but to give himself airs, as if anybody could like a dwarf baboon!' But His Majesty's judgment may have been a little prejudiced by a small business transaction, of which more hereafter.

Just now Lord Stanhope is talking to a lady sitting under the large portrait of Charles I., who is none other than Melesina, the king's own daughter, who seems to find him agreeable and entertaining; and whom he married in the hope of inheriting the £40,000 which His Majesty was

said to have left her mother, the Duchess of Kendal.

The king is in good humour, and wears a certain air of *bonhomie*, and beside him stands Lord Lincoln, who is addressing His Majesty without being spoken to, a thing which Lady Townshend tells that shrewd supporter of the House of Hanover, the Duke of Argyle, 'she always previously thought was high treason.' Beside the little fat monarch is the Duchess of Shrewsbury, who was considered 'extraordinary in her discourse,' and who Lady Wentworth, who sits at some distance, declares 'will devour the king, for she will not let anyone speak to him but herself, and,' adds her ladyship, 'she says she rivals Madame Kilmansegge.'

The duchess was more witty than wise, and had afforded her friends considerable satisfaction by giving them a spicy bit of scandal to talk over, before fate and the church united her to her lord and master. She was an accomplished woman, whose conversation was invariably brilliant if not decent, and who had ever a ready word to amuse the crowd that was always sure to gather around her. The

Duchess of Marlborough is watching her with envious eyes, and, of course, has something to say of her. 'She played at ombre on the public walks at Bath,' says her grace, in a voice loud enough to be heard half way across the room, 'that she might be sure to have company enough, and she was as well pleased in a crowd of strangers as the common people are with a bull-baiting or a mountebank.' And 'Queen Sarah,' having delivered herself of this speech, looks scornfully at my Lady Shrewsbury, who is lady-in-ordinary to the Princess of Wales, and high in favour with His Majesty, whom she is mightily diverting just now. 'Sire,' she says, looking at the little man straight in the face, '*nous sommes en colère contre votre Majesté de ce que vous ne voulez pas vous faire peindre ; et voici votre medaille qui donnera votre effigie à la postérité, où vous avez un nez long comme le bras.*' 'Tant mieux,' replies the king, 'c'est une tête à l'antique,' at which piece of wit the circle surrounding His Majesty laughs heartily.

In a group near the king stands my Lord Finch, in a red coat, trimmed with gold, which gave one of his friends an opportunity of

making a joke by telling him he 'looked as gay as a goldfinch,' and close by are some of the ladies of the bed-chamber talking to a few of the German beauties who are scattered plentifully through the drawing-room; one of them being in bad temper to-day, and a little envious, says aloud that 'Englishwomen look pitiful and sneaking, that they hold their heads down, and always look frightened, whereas foreigners' (meaning themselves) 'hold their heads boldly up, and hold out their breasts, and make themselves look stately,' on hearing which my Lady Deloraine replies to the accuser with great spirit, 'We show our quality by our birth and titles, madame, and not by sticking out our bosoms.' Kilmansegge and Schulenburg are there too, and are just now laughing, and repeating a French phrase which has more meanings than one, that the Duchess of Bolton has innocently made use of from want of a greater familiarity with that tongue, and this gives poor Lady Cowper the idea that these foreign ladies 'are no better than they should be.'

And here is Madame Tron, the handsome wife of the Venetian ambassador, who is as jealous of her

as any Turk, and who, as a means of preserving her virtue, beats her periodically. But Madame is gay-hearted like her countrywomen, and cares very little how her lord and master may threaten or punish her, if he leaves her face untouched. When he administers his chastisement she is wont to call out, '*Prenez garde à mon visage,*' for if her loveliness was marred, then, indeed, the world was lost to her. She is a charming woman, and has earned for herself the name, '*la beauté sans souci.*' Crushing her way through the drawing-room, which is well crowded, she repeats her cry in a clear, musical voice that reaches the king's ears, '*Prenez garde à mon visage,*' upon which George Lewis, hearing, says, '*Entendez-vous l'ambassadrice ? Elle vous abandonne tout le reste du corps, pourvu que vous ayez soin du visage.*'

Amongst the crowd of German ladies is Madame Robethon, whose figure resembles a barrel in shape, and who, from the gruff tone of her voice, has been called by Philip Chesterfield, who was exceedingly fond of nicknames, '*Madame Grenouille.*'

There too is the smiling courtier, Bubb Dod-

ington, making merry with my Lady Marr over the story of the miserly Sir James Lowther, who drove in his coach to the George coffee-house to exchange a bad halfpenny which he had got in change after drinking his twopenny cup of coffee the previous day.

Mr. Wortley is within earshot of the king, ready to speak French if His Majesty so desires, and at the far end of the room is his wife, Lady Mary, then remarkable for her wit and beauty, and giving no hint of her becoming 'that old, foul, tawdry, painted, plastered personage' which Horace Walpole describes a quarter of a century later. When she was but eight years old she became the toast of the famous Kit-cat Club. It was one of the customs of the members to elect a beauty annually, to whom during the year toasts should be drunk, verses made, and whose name should be written with a diamond on their drinking-glasses; one who should be to them as a goddess, in whose honour they would drink the richest vintage of the grape, as did the Greeks to their divinities of old. At one of the meetings held for the purpose of choosing a toast for the year, the eccentric

Lord Kingston proposed his daughter, Lady Mary, not then eight years old, and declared her the prettiest girl of those mentioned on the list submitted to them. To this some of the other members did not lend a willing ear, and mentioned that the rules of the club forbade the election of a beauty they had not seen. 'Then you shall see her,' said my lord, stoutly, and immediately he sent home word to have her dressed in her finest gown and carried down to him at the club. When, in obedience to him, she was brought and presented to the members, she was received with acclamations, her claim was at once admitted, her health drunk, and her name engraved upon a drinking-glass. She was handed about from member to member, petted, caressed, and praised by some of the most distinguished men in England. The impression which the scene made on her was never forgotten. Even then the love of admiration, which became the ruling passion of her life, had taken root in her heart, and, when speaking years afterwards of this day, she declared 'pleasure was too poor a word to express her sensations, that they

amounted to ecstasy, and that never again could she spend such a day of uninterrupted happiness.'

In the royal drawing-room, Lady Mary is engaged in performing the difficult task of talking to half a dozen men at once—courtiers, ambassadors, ministers. She has no great affection for her own sex, but she greatly delights in the interchange of wit and repartee with her male friends, and likes above all things to hear herself talking. It must be confessed she always talks cleverly and brilliantly. The old king is fond of listening to her; she has become a favourite of his, and can put him in good humour when he is sulky, and make him laugh when she wills; and, moreover, she can speak to him in his own language, and in French, so that he has not the difficulty of stammering the few words of English he can speak when addressing her, as is the case when he strives to converse with the other ladies of the Court.

Then Lady Mary treats him without much ceremony, and tells him stories of those around him, and startles him occasionally by the originality of her ideas, and for all of these

reasons he has a word of welcome for her when she comes to the royal drawing-room.

One evening it happened that she wanted to get away from the Court somewhat earlier than usual, and she communicated her desire to the Duchess of Kendal, who in turn told the king. His Majesty was not very willing to let her depart so soon, as he expected her to divert him, but after a while he reluctantly consented to dismiss her, saying it was not fair of her to deprive him of her company so soon, and paying her further compliments with which she was well pleased.

When at last she got away she hastened down the great stairs, and ran against Mr. Secretary Craggs, who was then high in the royal favour. He was about ascending to the drawing-room, and, seeing her in such haste, he asked her what was the matter; she told him she wanted to get away, and the king was unwilling to let her depart, hearing which he, thinking he might probably render the king a service, flung his arms around her, lightly carried her upstairs, set her down in the ante-chamber, kissed both her hands and, without a

word, left her. The royal pages, seeing she had returned, threw open the doors, and in another instant, whilst she was yet breathless and ruffled, she was in the presence of the king.

‘Ah ! la re-voilà,’ said the ugly old duchess, and George Lewis turned round. She was yet more fluttered and dazed when she saw him looking at her ; and without hesitating she went up to him and said, ‘Oh, Lord, sir, I have been so frightened,’ and she told him of her encountering Mr. Craggs, and of his carrying her back. The king was astonished ; but Lady Mary had scarcely finished her story when Mr. Craggs entered slowly and collectedly by another door, and made his usual obeisance to the king as coolly as possible. ‘Mais comment donc, Monsieur Craggs,’ said the king, turning his eyes on him. ‘Est-ce que c’est l’usage de ce pays de porter des belles dames comme un sac de froment ?’

Mr. Secretary Craggs for a moment was speechless, he had not expected that Lady Mary would have told on him, or that the king would have been displeased ; however, recovering himself quickly, he answered, with the ease of one used to the atmosphere of courts, ‘There is no-

thing I would not do for your Majesty's satisfaction,' a reply which helped to give an agreeable turn to the occurrence.

Lady Mary, from her powers of attraction, did not find much favour in the eyes of the Princess of Wales, but the Prince amply made up for her lack of appreciation. 'Cette diablesse, Madame la Princesse,' as the king was wont to style his daughter-in-law, was not a central figure in the drawing-rooms of St. James's during George Lewis's lifetime. She amused herself by playing cards with her ladies-in-waiting in the last saloon, which, though comparatively secluded, gave her a view of all that was passing in the other rooms; and here she could watch her maids-of-honour and the ladies of the court as they listened to or parried the fine speeches of gallants and wits.

Lady Cowper, one of the women of the bed-chamber, who describes herself as 'an English lady who has bread to put into her mouth,' plays at basset in the royal drawing-room, but for such low stakes as make those surrounding the card-table merry. The poor countess hears and sees them, and tells this uncivil lot that she plays

out of duty and not inclination, that she must save her money, having four children, and that there is nothing dishonest in playing for low stakes; whereon the idle courtiers are silenced, and content themselves with a sneer, seeing which the Princess says, in her kindly, soothing way, that 'a woman's highest duty is to her children.' Lady Cowper thanks her for the defence with a smile, and tells her she never fails to drink her health and the Prince's every night at supper. 'Then,' says the Prince, who is standing near and overhears her, 'I do not wonder that I have such good health since I came to England.' The Countess, who is right loyal, tells him, with another smile, that she and her children drank his health before he came to England under the name of 'Young Hanover Brave,' which was a title Mr. Congreve had given him in a ballad. 'And who may Mr. Congreve be?' asked the Prince, who was ignorant of the existence of this distinguished subject of his father's.

There is another figure familiar to the royal drawing-room, to wit, the Duchess of Bolton, who amuses the king as fully as her Grace of

Shrewsbury, or the vivacious Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. She has the reputation of being droll, and either to keep up that character, or through genuine slips of the tongue, says remarkable things now and then, which, if not always the most proper, succeed in pleasing His Majesty all the more.

One night she had been to Drury Lane to see Colley Cibber's comedy 'Love's Last Shift,' and the next day she must tell the king all about it in a gushing, excited way. 'But what was the play?' said His Majesty, in French. 'Cibber's "*La dernière chemise de l'amour*,"' she answered, with a serious face; then, when the old king burst out laughing, her Grace sees that she has made a mistake, and half covers her face with her fan. On another occasion she came into the drawing-room in a state of great excitement, and went straight up to the king, who asked her what was the matter. 'Mr. Whiston,' she said, 'told me the world will be burnt up in three years; and for my part,' she added, sagely, 'I am determined to go to China.'

The king did not care much for court ceremonies or parade of any kind, and, when he

could, he liked going to see the hunt at Richmond, where he afterwards dined with his congenial minister, Sir Robert Walpole, when he ate a great deal, drank more punch than was good for him, and grew right jovial. Richmond, indeed, became a favourite place with him, and he had a lodge built there, from a design by Henry Lord Pembroke, for his occasional residence, where he intended resorting to when the worries of court life hedged him round too closely, and it was not convenient for him to run off to Hanover.

Sir Robert Walpole offered him the sincerest flattery—imitation—in building at Richmond an unpretending residence for his own use, which by degrees assumed larger and larger proportions, until it became a mansion. Before this was completed he lived on the Hill, and here he came every Saturday night away from the interruptions of court and town, in order that on Sunday he might devote himself more fully to the business of his office. At this residence it was that he entertained the king much to His Majesty's satisfaction. Sir Robert, like the men of that period, had a habit of drinking deeply,

being early trained by his father, who used to say to him, 'You shall drink twice to my once, Robert, for I cannot permit the son in his sober senses to be a witness of his father's drunkenness.' In gratitude for the minister's hospitality, His Majesty bought the rangership of Richmond Park from Lord Clarendon, and gave it to Walpole's eldest son.

The king was fond of Hampton Court also, where he diverted himself and the courtiers right well. Once whilst staying there he invited down the Drury Lane Company : Barton Booth, Mills, Wilkes, Colley Cibber, the renowned Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Porter, and Miss Younger. His Majesty was fond of the drama, though he did not quite understand all that was said. 'Henry VIII.' was his favourite play, and during one season he witnessed its performance three times. Plays at this time occupied a large share of public attention, and were a fruitful subject of conversation. The announcement of a new drama caused an interest and sensation all over the town, and all the fashionable world and men of letters crowded to see its first performance. 'Here in town,' writes Pope, in 1718, 'we hum

over a piece of fine writing and whistle at a sermon. The stage is the only place we seem alive at.'

Before the Drury Lane Company went down, the fine old hall at Hampton Court was fitted up as a theatre with some taste and much magnificence. The king intended having plays twice a week during the summer, but the decorators took so long in fitting up the hall that only seven plays were performed there during the summer of 1718. His Majesty did not repeat the diversion during his life, except on the occasion of the Duke of Lorraine's visit, when the king paid £100 for a solitary performance.

George I. enjoyed these plays at Hampton Court, 'as the actors could see from the frequent satisfaction in his looks at particular scenes and passages,' as Colley Cibber tells. This chronicler says he noticed the king's pleasure when he came to the lines:—

'A word with you.

Let there be letters writ in every shire
Of the king's grace and pardon : the grieved commons
Hardly conceive of me. Let it be noised
That, through our intercession, this revokement
And pardon comes—I shall anon advise you
Farther in the proceeding.'

For their performance at Hampton Court, the actors were to receive their usual day's pay and travelling expenses; the court was to supply the music and wax lights, and have the wardrobes and scenery conveyed from town. The expenses of each representation amounted to £50, but, to prove his satisfaction in a practical manner, the king gave the company a round sum of £200 in addition, which garrulous old Cibber thought 'more than our utmost merit ought to have hoped for.' When he received the order for this sum from the Duke of Newcastle, who was Lord Chamberlain, he says he was so surprised that I 'imagined his Grace's favour or recommendation of our readiness or diligence must have contributed to so high a consideration of it, and was offering my acknowledgments as I thought them due; but was soon stopped short by his Grace's declaration that we had no obligations for it, but to the king himself, who had given it from no other motive than his own bounty;' which bounty to the poor players must have caused a great many fine things to be said of His Majesty.

• On this occasion His Majesty of course had

‘Henry VIII.’ played to him, and was so delighted that Sir Richard Steele, who held with Colley Cibber and Wilkes the patent of the Royal Company of Comedians, says, ‘The king liked the play so well that I was afraid I should have lost all my actors; for I was not sure that His Majesty would not keep them to fill the posts at court that he saw them so fit for in the play.’

Mr. Cibber knew how to manage his court cards well. When he wrote the ‘Nonjuror,’ a comedy dealing severely with the Jacobites, he dedicated it to the king in a preface ridiculous alike for its sycophancy and pomposity. It commenced: ‘In a time when all communities congratulate your majesty on the Glories of your Reign, which are continually arising from the Prosperities of your People; be graciously pleased, Dread Sire, to permit the lowliest of your subjects from the Theatre to take this occasion of offering their most humble acknowledgments for your Royal Favour and Protection.’

To this play went the king in his sedan-chair, followed by the usual procession. All the

courtiers who sought the royal favour came likewise, and the comedy was played for eighteen consecutive nights, then considered a long run. In consideration of the service the 'Nonjuror' was supposed to have rendered the government, the author was, more than ten years afterwards, made poet laureate, when Eusden, who was wont to imbibe something much stronger than nectar, timely vacated that post. Before this honour reached Colley Cibber, and until the day of his death, he was made the butt of the Jacobite party. Cibber was not, however, the first dramatist who had dedicated a play to the Hanoverian family. That honour was reserved for Susanna Centlivre, who, a year before the royal family came to England, inscribed a comedy, called 'The Wonder a Woman keeps a Secret,' to George Augustus, then just made Duke of Cambridge. When his Grace was made Prince of Wales, he gave this wise Susanna a handsome present, and 'bespoke the play,' which the new court honoured with their presence.

His Majesty and those surrounding him seem to have enjoyed themselves heartily. When

the court stayed in town, the king visited Richmond and Hampton Court almost weekly, to which places he usually went by water, as he preferred this easy mode of travelling to being shaken by the motion of his coach. His journeys up and down the Thames were like triumphal processions. The courtiers went in barges hung with blue and scarlet and purple cloth, making the river a blaze of colour; and almost invariably there was a boat-load of musicians, whose duty it was to divert the royal ear during His Majesty's journey.

There is an account in the *Flying Post*, a right loyal paper, of a trip he made a few months after his coronation from Whitehall to Limehouse to take the air 'with their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and several of the nobility in their barges. They were diverted,' says this record of a royal amusement, 'by a concert of musick on board, which was elegantly performed by the best masters and instruments. The river was crowded with boats, and the banks with spectators, so that both from the river and the shore there were repeated huzzas and loud acclamations of,

“Long live King George, the Prince and Princess, and all their Royal issue!” As they returned, abundance of ships were illuminated with lanterns in their rigging, and the houses on both sides of the river with candles. The musick continued playing, and guns were fired from the ships and wharfs till His Majesty landed.’

There is no doubt the expression of the people’s loyalty was not diminished by the *Flying Post*.

CHAPTER VII.

His Majesty's 'most dear Son'—His Character, Tastes, and Opinion of Literature—The Princess of Wales—Her Talents and bitter Tongue—How she Governed her Husband—The King visits Hanover—Unwillingness to make the Prince, Regent—The King at Hanover—The Prince affects Popularity—His Majesty's Uneasiness and Return to England—Royal Displeasure—Scene at the Christening of the Young Prince—Its Consequences.

WHEN George I. landed at Greenwich, he was accompanied by his only son, George Augustus, who was, ten days later, created Prince of Wales. His Royal Highness was then in his thirty-first year, and had been married for nine years to Caroline of Anspach. In 1706 Queen Anne had created him Baron of Tewkesbury, Viscount Northallerton, Earl of Milford Haven, and Marquess and Duke of Cambridge.

George Augustus was anxious to sit in the House of Lords, and visit the country over which he should one day reign as king; but Her Majesty by no means shared his anxiety, and was not at all anxious to see him. When the Hanoverian Minister applied to the English Lord Chancellor for a writ of summons on behalf of the new-made duke, Queen Anne turned a deaf ear to the petition, and subsequently wrote to the Hanoverian Court that it was better for his interests and those of his house that the new duke should stay quietly at home for the present, which piece of advice the young man was obliged to take.

He had never set foot upon English soil until he landed in his father's train, when the Elector was hailed as king. He had shown the world that he had courage, and was a good soldier when he was yet almost a boy. At the age of fifteen he had fought with the British troops under the command of the great Duke of Marlborough, and was present at the battle of Oudenarde, where he behaved gallantly, and had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy's troops routed from the field. At this engagement

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humanity at large from those who surrounded him, he formed a poor idea of its merit, and believed the only thing worth living for was himself.

Throughout his life his vices were of the coarsest order, and were marked by all the scandalous publicity which bad taste could suggest. Not one of the Muses nine found a friend or patron in him; books he heartily detested. Horace Walpole says that he preferred a guinea to a composition as perfect as 'Alexander's Feast;' no doubt this assertion is true, for his contempt for verse was occasionally manifested, and Lord Chesterfield adds that he looked on the poet Gay, who for years was a frequent attendant at his court, as a mechanic; and once when this illustrious Prince heard that Lord Hervey had written some poems, he said to him, reprovingly, 'My Lord Hervey, you ought not to write verses; it is beneath one of your rank; leave such work to little Mr. Pope.' But, if he had no taste for art, he never pretended to have, a merit which has almost completely vanished in these days of greater civilization. The only kind of beauty, indeed, which

pleased the royal eye was that of woman's form, and before this he bowed down with an admiration which some of the same sex, who did not come in for a share of it, freely admitted was blind.

His consort was said to have the finest bust of any woman in Europe; and, by the Prince's desire, there was always as much of it on view as the decorum of those days—which was not too narrow—would admit. One day when she had become Queen, her not sufficiently dressed Majesty shivered from cold, and her 'good Howard,' one of the women of the bed-chamber, who was also a royal mistress, placed a handkerchief on the queen's shoulders; the king viewing this act with an ill-approving eye, crossed the drawing-room before a tittering crowd of courtiers, and snatched it off, giving at the same time an unkind cut to his mistress by asking her aloud, 'Is it because you have an ugly neck yourself you hide the Queen's?'

He was never open-handed as the day either to melting charity, deserving friendship, or other objects worthy in themselves, save when his immediate pleasure was concerned; in this way

strongly resembling many princes and peers, and men of lesser rank, and men and women of no rank at all, who live and have their being in the present day.

He had shown great signs of pleasure at the prospect of coming to England, yet he never exhibited any love for the country or the people he was destined to rule; and, when called to the throne, he ran back to his Electorate continually, leaving the kingdom to the charge of his ministers, and stayed in that blissful land as long, and sometimes longer than the Parliament would permit him. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, speaking of him, says, after first referring to his 'small understanding,' that 'he looked on all men and women he saw as creatures he might kick or kiss for his diversion; and, whenever he met with any opposition in those designs, he thought his opposers insolent rebels to the will of God, who created them for his use; and judged of the merit of all people by their ready submission to his orders, or the relation they had to his power.'

His consort, Caroline Wilhelmina Dorothea,

Princess of Wales, was a woman of very different parts. Her figure was stately and graceful, her face—though it could never have been called beautiful, and notwithstanding that it was marked by smallpox—possessed a charm that few who approached her failed to recognise. She had, in early life, refused the Archduke Charles, son of His Imperial Majesty Leopold I., because his merit in appreciating her was more than counterbalanced by his belonging to the Roman Catholic faith, and married George Augustus of Hanover in preference : and from the day she became his bride to that of her death she loved him as only a much-enduring, gentle, and, withal, forgiving wife loves ; loved him much better than he deserved, never swerving in her fidelity, though surrounded by a profligate court, in which her husband made wifely infidelity the fashion.

Throughout her life she strove to close her eyes to his sins, and to the shame which he cast upon her ; and had no words for him but those of tenderness and affection in return for his oftentimes brutal roughness, cruel humiliations, and long neglects. ‘ My children are not

as a grain of sand compared with him,' she used to say, and her conduct through life showed that this was not a mere idle phrase. Her manners had a gentleness that easily gained her friends; her voice was soft and musical, and there was a dignity and courtesy in her bearing which never failed in impressing even her husband. Mentally her attainments were beyond those usually acquired by royalty in those days. She was a linguist, a lover of books, a student of philosophy and the sciences. She delighted in listening to the controversy of theologians, had an appreciation for wit, and as a conversationalist was one of the most agreeable women at the court. Her good traits indeed were many. With the suffering she had a quick sympathy that prompted her to many generous acts, and her charity to the distressed left her at her death in debt to the king. She had an excellent memory for her friends, and, on the other hand, she seldom forgot those who in any way slighted or strove to supplant her power, as many incidents in her life showed.

This was the woman whom her royal father-in-law termed 'a she devil;' which goes to

show that members of the same family, especially when such members are fathers and mothers-in-law, are not always the best judges of each other's characters; and it is quite certain that this daughter-in-law by no means deserved the bad language which the king was in the habit of using towards her.

Though the Princess had many excellent qualities, it must be confessed she had a sharp-edged tongue; and though she was much too excellent a wife to favour her husband with any examples of her power in this respect, she did not extend a like clemency to the king or his favourites, but sought in a right womanly manner to repay him for the broken English and guttural German, meaning much nastiness, which he greeted her with whenever he was particularly angry.

Perhaps her chief and most valuable gift was tact, which from first to last she exercised with wonderful delicacy and skill, not only on those about her, but on her husband especially, over whom she held a strong influence, which would have been lost for ever if he had once suspected its existence; and this she maintained even whilst

his mistresses and favourites sought to govern him for their own purposes. She listened with an air of supreme deference to his counsels, humoured his whims, and managed him so adroitly that he obeyed her wishes, believing them to be dictated by his own mind. When the Prince became king, she and Sir Robert Walpole played into each other's hands. She it was who helped to re-establish the great Minister in his position which he lost on the death of George I. Having implicit confidence in his counsels and power, she would consult with him in private as to what measures the king should adopt; and, when they had agreed, it was but a question of time for His Majesty to follow the policy they had determined on. Her husband was, of course, as unconscious of this as she desired he should be; and it was her care that he should retain his blissful ignorance. In this she succeeded well. If she and her royal Spouse were talking, when Walpole came to the king to speak of business he had already arranged with the queen, she would rise up, courtesy, and offer to retire; when the king would generally bid her stay, saying to Sir Robert, 'You see how

much I am governed by my wife, as they say I am. Hoh, hoh, it is a fine thing to be governed by one's wife!' 'O sire!' she would reply to the pompous little man, 'I must be vain indeed to pretend to govern your Majesty.'

So subtly did she use this power that the courtiers, including the shrewd and clever Dean Swift, did not for years suspect it; and this churchman blindly sought the favour of the Heir-apparent through his mistress, Mrs. Howard, to whom he seemed to devote more of his time than to his wife. George I. shrewdly suspected the Princess's influence, and on that account gave her a double share of the dislike in which he held his son; and it was also recognised by the far-seeing Sir Robert Walpole, to whose courage and cleverness the Hanoverian monarchs owed it that they ever sat on the throne, or were allowed to retain the crown. Sir Robert, first through policy, and afterwards through honest friendship, became devoted to her through life.

The Princess has been described—by one of her own sex—as 'having the genius which qualified her for the government of a fool,' but the fact of her exercising that power without its

being suspected or recognised by the man who felt it most, might raise her genius to a higher standpoint.

When she landed in England a few weeks after her husband and father-in-law, she was accompanied by the three daughters then born to her. Her entrance into the city was almost private, and it was only at the Lord Mayor's procession that she made her first public *début*. A brief description of one of her early appearances in the royal drawing-room is given by the Hon. Peter Wentworth, a courtier during three reigns, to whose private correspondence with his brother, the Earl of Strafford, as well as that of other members of the family, we are indebted for much that these pages contain.

'The Princess,' he writes, 'came into the drawing-room at seven o'clock, and stayed until ten. There was a basset-table and ombre-tables, but, the Princess sitting down to piquet, all the company flocked about to that table, and the others were not used. The Duchess of Marlborough, Lady Pembroke, and the Countess de Pekenburgh played with her. They say we are

to have these apartments every night but Sunday.'

It was not until the Prince and Princess of Wales were about two years in England that they came prominently before the public, and then only in consequence of their quarrel with the king. Before this the Prince was little noticed. Lady Cowper makes mention of him now and then in her diary, once to state that he had an intrigue with the Prime Minister's wife, of which both Walpole and the Princess were aware; and again she gives a glimpse of him on an occasion, when he was ill in bed one morning 'of a surfeit,' and felt no inclination to get up; then all the ladies of the bed-chamber in attendance on the Princess were called into the room where he lay, and, tables being set for the fair dames, they were made to play with the Prince's fine gentlemen in order to amuse his sick Royal Highness.

George I. had not been two years in England when he began to long for the sight of his beloved Hanover. He had stayed in a foreign country, and ruled over a foreign people for almost nineteen months, and he was already well

tired of both. His little Electorate had been always dearer to him and occupied more of his thoughts than the United Kingdom. It was in vain that his ministers reminded him of the unsettled state of the nation, of the danger his quitting England might entail on his newly-established monarchy, and remonstrated with him; but His Majesty, who had never been used to have his royal will opposed or listen to arguments, grew angry at the interference, and gave them to understand that in this respect he would do as he pleased, and 'would not endure a longer confinement in the kingdom.'

Sir Robert Walpole, seeing that his advice was so badly received, and had only the effect of placing him in ill-favour with the sovereign, gave way to His Majesty's desire, merely suggesting that the Prince of Wales should be appointed Regent in his absence; whereon His Majesty's sacred brow became a trifle ruffled. One of the causes of this royal father's dislike to his son was on account of the Prince's affection for his mother, and his belief in her innocence. But besides this unnatural reason there were others which gave His Majesty equal offence.

The king's mother, the old Electress Sophia, made no secret of the poor regard in which she held his abilities, and of her affection for her grandson, whom she had brought up and helped to educate, though by such bringing up he profited not at all. Then again when the accession of the House of Hanover was settled, Queen Anne, who much disliked George Lewis, her once suitor, passed him over in neglect and invested his son with the Order of the Garter. These things, small in themselves, produced a feeling of jealousy in the king's mind which was not lessened by a proposal of the Tory party that an annuity of £100,000 should be settled on the Prince independently of his father. The king in every way in his power restricted the authority and influence of his son. Though he was nominally a member of the Privy Council, yet he was not permitted to have a knowledge of the secret affairs of State, but that privilege was given privately to the king's mistresses, who used it to the advantage of their own mercenary purposes. Count Broghio writes to the king of France: 'The Prince endeavours to obtain information of what passes from persons who are

attached to him, but he learns nothing either from the king, the Duchess, or the ministers.' With such feelings existing in His Majesty's mind, he received the suggestion as to the regency with bad grace ; as for the Prince, when he became aware of the king's determination to visit Hanover, he at once looked forward with pleasure to the honour which awaited him, and eagerly anticipated the sense of importance and freedom it would give him.

This gave fresh offence to His Majesty, and he hesitated in allowing him to become Regent unless he was subject to the closest restrictions. He demanded that the Prince should dismiss the Duke of Argyle from the appointment of Groom of the Stole. His Majesty believed that the Duke exercised an influence over the Prince, and made a point of him leaving his service ; and His Royal Highness was obliged to consent, though he believed the demand was made merely for the purpose of thwarting him. Then the king sent one of his German favourites to state that it was his royal wish other persons should join the Prince in his regency, to which the ministers replied that 'on a careful perusal

of precedents, finding no instance of persons being joined in commission with the Prince of Wales, and few if any restrictions, they were of opinion that the constant tenor of ancient practice could not conveniently be receded from.'

Yet His Majesty was not satisfied; he could not well oppose his ministers from making the Prince, Regent, but he was determined to shear him of as much of his glory as possible by merely appointing him nominally 'Guardian of the Realm and Lieutenant.' The last scion of a royal house who had borne that title was Edward the Black Prince.

When at last the question of the regency was settled, the king set out for Hanover, accompanied by the two Turks and his two mistresses, without whom he was as unwilling to travel as they were to let him out of their sight. Probably they had some lurking fears that, if they remained behind the king's most excellent Majesty, they might meet with some unpleasantness from the Prince, who detested them, and from his friends, who, of course, shared his opinions. The Prince could say disagreeable things sometimes, and never cared to spare his father's mistresses.

A report of some words he had once made use of reached Madame Kilmansegge, and she, with tears in her great round eyes, went to the Princess to complain that His Royal Highness had said in court she had intrigued with all the men in Hanover. The stout creature's immaculate character was so injured by such a statement that she declared her acquaintance had cut her, and as a proof that she was at least without stain and above reproach, if not beyond the reach of suspicion, she said her husband had taken pains to vindicate her character, and thereupon drew from her pocket a testimony of her strict faithfulness as a wife, signed by her deserted but lenient spouse. The Princess, who shared her husband's dislike to Kilmansegge, who had caused much misery to the unhappy Sophia Dorothea, laughed in the royal mistress's face, and told her 'it was indeed a bad reputation which rendered such a certificate necessary.'

The king was mightily indisposed in crossing over to his beloved Electorate, but as soon as he reached Herrnhausen, his summer residence, all things went smoothly with him. During his absence, his Hanoverian Court had continued its

ceremonies and gaieties by his desire. His grandson, Prince Frederick, resided there, and received the same attention and the same attendance as George Augustus had before he became king. On His Majesty's return the little court became more brilliant. A Drawing-room was held every evening, and the king and his courtiers walked about the lamp-lit gardens of Herrnhausen in the cool summer nights. Here he forgot the wrangling of parties which divided his kingdom, the anxieties of his ministers, and the hard truths which the press—then beginning for the first time to assert itself—said of him. Lord Peterborough, who went to see the king here, told Mr. Clavering that His Majesty was so happy 'he believed he had forgotten the accident which happened to him and his family on the 1st of August, 1714.'

At home all things went well. When the king was at a safe distance, the Prince set about making himself popular, a task never difficult for a prince to achieve. The first advantage which he possessed was his understanding and speaking, though not fluently, the English tongue; another, fully as great, was the influ-

ence of his consort. All those who could not bask in the sunshine of His Majesty's favour now rallied round the Prince; the former was old and a trifle dull, and but little pleased with his English subjects, who were unable to convey to him the gracious sentiments they would have him believe they felt; the latter was young and gay, and took pains, not only to be civil, but courteous to all. So his praises were loudly sung.

The Prince and Princess moved to Hampton Court, where his friends and courtiers soon followed him, and where much splendour and gaiety was kept up. The Prince had never been seen in such an amiable light, and his graciousness became the wonder of the court. He dined publicly with the Princess daily in her apartments, and every morning they, with the maids-of-honour, generally went on the water in barges finely carved and gilt, hung with crimson silk curtains, and covered to the water's edge with scarlet cloth, when the maids would sing glees and ballads to please the Prince's ear, or chatter away during the pleasant hours of the summer days. In the evenings they went to the bowl-

ing-green, when not only the maids, but the woman of the bed-chamber, with the ladies and gentlemen of the court, played games and made merry. Then when they were tired they walked in the quaint gardens until the grey darkness of the summer nights came, when they went indoors to supper or cards, or perhaps to dance till midnight. It was a pleasant, careless life, full of that robust enjoyment familiar to our ancestors a couple of hundred years ago.

Here, too, came the ministers, who were as anxious to please the Prince as he was anxious to please them : and the result of this mutual amiability was that the liberal measures passed during the king's absence were attributed by the people to the Prince. My Lord Townsend, Sir Robert Walpole, and Count Bothmore were often to be seen at Hampton Court during the regency. The latter had been ordered by the king to keep watch on the court during his absence, and report all that passed to him. Another friend of the king's, who was frequently here, was my Lord Sunderland, who was sent to Hanover by the Ministry to persuade the king to return, after His Majesty had been ab-

sent some months. Before he went, he must take leave of the Princess, who had begun to take a share in the direction of politics and politicians, and for this purpose went to see her in the great gallery. In the course of his conversation with her, some difference of opinion arose, probably as to what messages he should bear to the king, which led to high words. Whereon the Princess asked him to speak low, as the people in the garden below could hear him; when he cried out, roughly, 'Let them hear.' To which answer she returned:

'Well, if you have a mind, let them; but you shall walk next the windows, for in the humour we both are, one of us must certainly jump out at the window, and I am resolved it shan't be me.'

To increase his popularity, the Prince resolved to visit the provinces, at the mere prospect of which the ancestors of our country cousins were almost beside themselves with joy. When the royal progress was made through Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire, the good people got drunk as lords from the gladness of their hearts, and lit bonfires, and rang church bells, and made

long speeches ; for never in their time had there been such occasion for general merriment. Indeed the Prince became so popular that news of it must reach Hanover, and destroy the peace of His Sacred Majesty during the hours he passed with Madame Platen. His Royal Highness found it pleasant to play at being king, even if only for a little while, and did his best to make his short reign enjoyable to the people, if only to draw a contrast between his own and his father's regime. Lady Cowper hints in her diary that the king intended remaining in Hanover. 'M. Robethon,' she writes, 'says the king will come back again, which he did not intend to have done if these things had not been arranged' (*i.e.*, if the Prince had not assumed such power). When, on his departure from London, her ladyship wished him a good journey and a quick return, His Majesty was in mighty good humour, 'and looked as if the last part of the speech was needless, and that he did not think of it.'

However unwilling he may have been, back he came to his English subjects in December ; and it was plain to all that whatever jealousy

and dislike he felt for the Prince was now much increased, and that henceforth there must be two parties at St. James's. Though the king gave little outward sign of his feelings, it was evident to the courtiers that a storm was gathering in the royal atmosphere, which at any moment might break above their heads. The expected moment was not long in arriving.

Shortly after His Majesty's return, the Princess of Wales gave birth to a son, and in due time preparations were made for the royal christening. The Prince had asked the king and his uncle, the Bishop of Osnaburgh, to stand as sponsors, and to this proposal His Majesty seemingly consented, but a short time before the ceremony changed his royal mind, and insisted that the Duke of Newcastle should stand as godfather instead of the bishop. His Grace was a man whom the Prince abhorred. It is of this nobleman Lady Hervey, writing years later from Bath, says, "Tis a comical sight to see him with his blue ribband and star, and a cabbage under each arm, or a chicken in his hand, which after he himself has purchased at market, he carries home for his dinner.' His Majesty was

well aware of his son's feelings towards the Duke, and the Prince believed it was on account of his dislike to his Grace that he was selected. The king, whose obstinacy to all persons but his mistresses was a prominent characteristic, would hear of no objection to the Duke, and insisted on his standing sponsor. The Prince was therefore obliged to submit to what he considered an indignity to himself and his son, but restrained his feelings as well as he could until after the ceremony was over.

This took place in the Princess's chamber. His Majesty, the Duke of Newcastle, and the god-mother stood at one side of the bed, the Prince and maids-of-honour at the other. At the sight of his Grace the Prince's sense of indignation was roused, and no sooner was the christening over, and the king had gone out of the room, than the Prince stepped over to the Duke, held up his hand and forefinger to him threateningly, and in a great passion called out to him, 'You are a rascal, but I shall find you,' meaning, 'I shall find time to be revenged.' In a moment all was confusion; his Grace was

insulted, the Prince in a fury, the maids frightened.

The news of the scene spread like wildfire through the court; those who espoused the king's cause were indignant. His Majesty had never since his arrival displayed such anger as when he heard of it; he believed, or pretended to believe, that the Prince had said, 'I will fight you,' and had challenged the Duke by such words to a duel almost in his royal presence. He blustered, used strong language, and had the Prince placed under arrest. 'What was my astonishment,' says Mrs. Howard, who was woman of the bed-chamber to the Princess, 'when, going to the Princess's apartment the next morning, the yeomen in the guard chamber pointed their halberds at my breast, and told me I must not pass. I urged that it was my duty to attend the Princess; they said, no matter—I must not pass that way.'

This disturbance in St. James's caused the wildest scandal, which was increased when the Prince and Princess were commanded to leave the palace, and were obliged to take temporary

lodgings in Lord Grantham's house in Albemarle Street. On the evening of the second day after the christening, the Dukes of Roxburgh, Kent, and Kingston waited on the Prince, by the king's command, for some explanation of his conduct; but these three gentlemen found him unchanged in his sentiments towards his Grace of Newcastle. When they asked if he had said he would fight the Duke, he declared he had not. 'But,' said His Royal Highness, 'I said I would find him, and I will find him, for he has often failed in his respect to me, particularly on the late occasion, by insisting on standing god-father to my son when he knew it was against my will.' One of the noble lords told him that the offending Duke acted as sponsor merely in obedience to His Majesty, whereon His Royal Highness roundly told him that he did not believe it (for calling people liars was a royal luxury in which he occasionally indulged), and added that it was the right of all British subjects to choose sponsors for their children, and that he would allow no one to ill-use him. All of which was carried to the king.

After the visit of their three Graces, the Prince wrote the king a letter, in which he hopes 'His Majesty will have the goodness not to look upon what I said to the Duke in particular as a want of respect to your Majesty. However, if I have been so unhappy as to offend your Majesty, contrary to my intention, I ask your pardon, and beg your Majesty will be persuaded that I am, with greatest respect, your Majesty's most humble and most dutiful son and servant, George P.'

To this His Majesty paid but slight heed, and was of opinion that if the intentions of His Royal Highness as to his submission 'were such as were to be expected from a good son, he would not fail to agree to and sign' some singularly arbitrary articles which he had had drawn up, compelling the Prince to give up his children to his guardianship, and 'not to hold communication with or have in his service any person or persons distasteful to the king;' to which the Prince formerly declined to submit. Four children, not including the infant whose christening was the cause of the quarrel, were then born to the Prince and Princess of Wales; the eldest of whom,

Frederick Louis, afterwards Prince of Wales, was left behind in Hanover, and never permitted to visit England until his father became king. The three remaining children, Anne, Amelia, and Caroline, who had landed with the Princess, were now claimed by the king, and were not allowed to accompany their parents when they departed from St. James's. The infant, for whom the Duke stood sponsor, died when three months old, and was buried privately in Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster Abbey.

The town was, of course, vastly diverted by the royal quarrel, and the poetasters hurried to make capital of it, and produced 'An Excellent New Ballad,' a few verses of which can be given without offence.

' God prosper long our noble king,
His Turks and Germans all ;
A woful christ'ning late there did
In James's house befall.

' To name a child with might and mane
Newcastle took his way,
We all may rue the child was born
Who christ'ned was that day.

' His sturdy sire, the Prince of Wales,
A vow to God did make,

That, if he dared his child to name,
His heart full sore should ake.

‘ But on the day straight to the court
This duke came with a staff ;
Oh, how the prince did stamp and stare,
At which the duke did laugh.

‘ Hereat the prince did wax full wroth
Ev’n in his father’s hall ;
“ I’ll be revenged on thee,” he said,
“ Thou rogue and eke rascal.’

‘ The duke ran straightway to the king,
Complaining of his son ;
And the king sent three dukes more
To know what he had done.

.

‘ The king then took his grey goose quill
And dipt it o’er in gall,
And by Master Vice-Chamberlain
He sent to him this scrawl.

“ Take hence yourself and eke your spouse,
Your maidens and your men,
Your trunks and all your trumpery
Except your children.”

.

‘ The prince secured with muckle haste
Th’ artillery commission,
And with him trudged full many a maid,
But no one politician.

.

'Then up the street they took their way,
And knocked up good Lord Grantham,
Higledy, pigledy they lay,
And all went rantum scantum.

'Now sire and son had played their part,
What could befall beside?
Why, the poor babe took this to heart,
Kick'd up his heels and died.

'God grant the land may profit reap
From all this silly pother,
And send these fools may ne'er agree
Till they are at Han-o-ver.'

The Prince, when he left St. James's, was deprived of his usual guard and all signs of distinction; and an announcement was made in the *Gazette*, that all those who paid their respects to the Prince would not be received at court. This notice caused considerable alarm to the courtiers, who had now to decide whether they should make friends with His Majesty or the Prince; many of them were more eager to secure the favour of the coming king than that of the reigning Monarch, who was too closely surrounded by foreigners to admit the near approach of his English subjects.

CHAPTER VIII.

Leicester House Court and its Brilliancy—Lord Chesterfield's Wit and Mimicry—The Mad Duchess of Buckingham—'Smiling Mary' Bellenden—Lord Hervey and Mary Lapell—Sophia Howe—Miss Meadows.

AFTER a few weeks' residence in Albemarle Street, the Prince purchased a house in Leicester Fields for £6,000 from Portman Seymour. It had been originally built by the Earl of Leicester, and had on several occasions been let to persons of distinction, such as the Queen of Bohemia, the Prince's great-grandmother, and later on to the French and German ambassadors.

In Leicester House, situated at one of the corners of the square, the Prince and Princess set up a court of their own, which rivalled that

of St. James's. The Prince was sufficiently independent of his father. He had an annual allowance of £100,000 from a grateful nation; and the revenues of the Principality of Wales brought him the sum of £20,000 yearly besides. With this sum he endeavoured to maintain his dignity. Every morning a drawing-room was held at Leicester House, and three times a week receptions were given which soon became famed for their brilliancy and pleasure. It was the aim of the Prince and Princess to become popular, for their popularity was sure to anger the king. The Princess especially neglected nothing that would increase her in public favour, and for this reason overlooked many things objectionable in those who attended her crowded assemblies. Her husband had always been devoted to pleasure, but never more so than now, when Leicester House became the attraction of women of beauty and elegant beaux, and of accomplished wits with which the town abounded. The result was the attendance at the king's drawing-rooms became gradually thinner.

On the nights when there were no receptions,

assemblies, or concerts at Leicester House, the Prince and Princess went to balls, operas, and plays; and gaiety became the established order of the day. That most elegant and dissipated man, Lord Chesterfield, says, in writing to a friend about this period, 'Balls, assemblies, and masquerades have taken the place of dull, formal visiting days, and the women are more agreeable triflers than they were designed. Puns are extremely in vogue, and the license very great. The variation of three or four letters in a word breaks no squares, inasmuch that an indifferent punster may make a very good figure in the best companies.'

This same courtier was at once feared and liked, sought after and dreaded, because of the sharpness of his wit and the bitterness of his tongue; and yet it was his aim, as he says, 'to make every man like him, and every woman love him.' He had followed the Prince to Leicester House, and was no small attraction at the mimic court. He was one of the gentlemen of the bed-chamber to the Prince, and strongly espoused his side in the royal quarrel. This 'wit among lords, and lord among wits,' as Dr. Johnson

styles him, had a talent for mimicking, and used to entertain the Princess with specimens of his talents in this respect: ridiculing those who were obnoxious to her, and with the same ease imitating her when her back was turned. She often became aware that she was the object of his ridicule, and would frequently, between jest and earnest, warn him not to provoke her. 'You have more wit than I,' she would say, 'but I have a bitter tongue, and always repay my debts with exorbitant interest.' At which speech he would smile, deny that he had ever attempted to ridicule her—for a lie was nothing to this fine gentleman—and, when she had turned away, would mimic her once more for the amusement of the maids-of-honour. Then the Princess, seeing the smiles of those around her, would turn hastily and catch the courtier trying to compose his features and assume a look of tranquil innocence.

The Princess, though she feared him, would laugh heartily over his excellent mimicries of others, especially when it extended itself to Madame Kilmansegge, who was frequently the butt of his wit, and afforded him ample and

easy scope for ridicule. 'She looks young—if one may judge from her complexion,' said the Princess, a little maliciously, speaking of the royal mistress. 'One would judge her to be eighteen or twenty.'

'Yes, eighteen or twenty stone,' replied the worthy Chesterfield, with a grave countenance; and, when the Princess and those around her laughed, he continued: 'The standard of His Majesty's taste, as exemplified in his mistress, makes all ladies who aspire to his favour, and who are near the suitable age, strain and swell themselves, like the frogs in the fable, to rival the bulk and dignity of the Ox. Some succeed, others—burst!' At this speech all the ladies laugh once more; and, on the Duchess of Buckingham coming into the royal apartment, it is repeated to her, and diverts her vastly; for her Grace, though hating the Hanoverian family generally, detested the king in particular, and came to Leicester House in the hope of tormenting him.

The eccentric duchess was said to be the daughter of James II. Her mother was the Countess of Dorchester, mistress of that king,

who, speaking of herself and the ladies who occupied a like position towards His Majesty, was wont to say bluntly, 'We are none of us handsome, and if we have wit he' (the king) 'has not enough to find it out.' Her Grace of Buckingham, the supposed daughter of royalty, was extremely proud of her lineage, in which she implicitly believed, notwithstanding that her enemies declared her father was one Colonel Graham, who in the second James's day was a gay and fashionable young courtier, upon whom my Lady Dorchester looked with favourable eyes. The Colonel's legitimate daughter bore a strong resemblance to the Duchess, and he used to say, 'Well, well, kings are all powerful, and one must not complain, but certainly the same man is the father of these two women.'

Her Grace, by reason of her supposed descent from one of the royal Stuarts, had during the late reign employed herself in plotting for the restoration of the Pretender, and for this reason had frequently visited Rome and Versailles, travelling, as became the daughter of a king, in great pomp and state. She strove to impress on all the dignity and importance of her self-

imposed mission, for which she was laughed at heartily. When abroad, it was her habit to have the boxes of the theatres she honoured with her presence hung with crimson velvet, as if for the visits of royalty; and, because she was refused the honours due to a princess of the royal blood at the Court of Versailles, she determined never to appear there again.

However, all her plotting never had the desired effect, though she is said to have offered the bribe of her hand and fortune to Sir Robert Walpole if he would lend her his aid in restoring the Stuarts; but perhaps he considered these of little matter if he lost his head, and so refused the tempting bait as courteously as Cardinal Fleury at the French Court declined her proffered advice. When she went to Leicester House she dressed with regal magnificence, and her manner clearly showed she looked upon her host and hostess as people who had been raised from the proper sphere of life in which Providence had placed them. A story is told of her that once, in striving to drive through an enclosure of the park private to the royal family, she was informed she could not pass that way, as it

was reserved for royalty. 'Tell the king,' said the irate duchess, 'that, if it is reserved for royalty, he has no more right to go there than I have;' and George I., on hearing this, laughed heartily, and gave orders that she was to be allowed to pass through any part of the park she desired.

It was her custom, on the anniversary day of her royal grandsire's execution, to draw down the blinds and close the shutters of Buckingham House, and don weeds of deepest mourning, in respect to the king's memory. On one of these occasions she sent for Lord Hervey, and gave him an audience relative to the marriage of her grandson, then at Oxford, with my lord's daughter. Hervey found her in an apartment hung with black cloth, lighted only with wax candles, she being seated on a chair of state, surrounded by her attendants, all dressed in deep mourning. She had a morbid love of funeral pomp and the semblance of woe, which remained with her to the last. When the Duke of Buckingham died, the ceremony with which his Grace's passage to the tomb was conducted was a nine days' wonder of the town; he, poor

man, had also a love for posthumous state—perhaps it was contagious—and left the decent sum of £500 for a monument to himself that was to bear an inscription of his own composition, which, however, the Dean of Westminster Abbey did not see fit to have written on imperishable marble.

Later on her only son, Edmund, Duke of Buckingham, dying at the age of nineteen, she had again an opportunity for indulging her fancy; which indeed she did to an extraordinary degree. . She wrote to the Duchess of Marlborough requesting a loan of the triumphal car which had carried the Warrior Duke to the tomb; at which request the Duchess was indignant, and sent word, ‘It carried my Lord Marlborough, and shall never be used for anybody else,’ to which the afflicted mother, never being behindhand with a proper answer, wrote back, ‘I have consulted the undertaker, and he tells me I may have a finer for twenty pounds.’ Pope wrote the epitaph, which, after enumerating the young Duke’s many virtues, ends by stating that he was a saint in heaven.

His mother, yet on earth, had a wax statue

made of him which she dressed in costly fashion, and exhibited in a glass case in Westminster Abbey, as was the custom in those days; and, being much pleased with the effect, she caused one to be made of herself, which she clad with velvet and adorned with jewels and had on exhibition for years previous to her demise. Before that event took place, she also arranged for her funeral procession, and one day during her last illness, when she feared that death had already come, she called out, 'Why don't they send the canopy for me to see? Let them send it, though all the tassels are not finished.' And then, poor soul! her ruling passion being strong in death, she made her ladies promise that, if she should lie senseless, they would not sit down in the room before she was dead.

Perhaps the most extraordinary act of hers was her writing a character of herself which she gave to Pope, and pressed him, as he says, 'by all the adjurations of friendship to give her my sincere opinion of it.' He was also requested by her to select out of it as much as he thought true and return it to her. This he did, and, the

extracts being in his handwriting, she passed them off as if written originally by him, and then fell out with him for having objected to some fine passages which her own copy contained. Probably she considered herself a better judge of her mental and physical qualities than the poet. As the character stands, it is perhaps unequalled for its plain terms of its self-appreciation. 'The nicest eye,' it states, 'could find no fault in the outward lineaments of her face or proportion of her body. It was such as pleased wherever she had a desire it should; yet she never envied that of any other which might better please in general, in the same manner as being content that her merits were esteemed where she desired they should, she never depreciated those of any other that were esteemed or preferred elsewhere. For she aimed not at a general love or a general esteem where she was not known; it was enough to be possessed of both wherever she was.'

This is pretty well of its kind, but her remarks on her mental qualities are still more wonderful. 'Her understanding was such,' says this char-

acter, 'as must have made a figure had it been in a man ; but the modesty of her sex threw a veil over its lustre, which, nevertheless, suppressed only the expression, not the exertion of it ; for her sense was not superior to her resolution, which, when once she was in the right, preserved her from making it only a transition to the wrong, the frequent weakness even of the best women . . . Her heart,' she continues, with exquisite humility, 'was as compassionate as it was great ; her affections warm even to solicitude ; her friendship not violent or jealous, but rational and persevering ; her gratitude equal and constant to the living, to the dead boundless and heroical. What person soever she found worthy of her esteem, she would not give up for any power on earth ; and the greatest on earth whom she could not esteem obtained from her no further tribute than decency. . . . Her love and aversion, her gratitude and resentment, her esteem and neglect, were equally open and strong, and alterable only from the alteration of the persons who created them. Her mind was too noble to be insincere, and her heart too honest to stand in need of it ; so that she never

found cause to repent her conduct either to a friend or an enemy.' Certainly her Grace should have been a happy woman.

When George I. died, his successor did not behave so leniently to the Duchess's whims and her talent for plotting against his house. When she was desirous of sending her son, then a boy of twelve, to be educated in France, she feared that such an act might be regarded as an excuse for her visiting that country in order to foster her favourite scheme, and wrote a rather singular letter to consult a friend of some influence. 'In case my son should go to France, to follow his exercises better than he could learn 'em here, whether he may not be seen and examined sometimes. Now Mr. Costa *dos* instruct him without any hazard of forfeiture to a child. I know his mamma could not have the advantage of hearing herself his opinions without a forfeiture people would very willingly take. In short, the king has forbid me and my son the liberties we were permitted in his father's (and which confines my son from air and exercise in town) reign, and I was no favourite in it. But, by the

Duchess of Kendal's means, I had a few common acts of breeding and humanity showed me, that of the same priviledges of the king's park, which I was allowed in Queen Anne's reign . . . though I fancy'd myself a sort of favourite of the queen's because I have about ten letters under her hand which flatters me with it; and many personal assurances besides. I confess I am much tempted to breed my son abroad if I could secure his religion well, and education better, though it makes it impracticable for me to settle as I could wish with him; yet I could visit him when I was not otherwise employ'd.'

Another prominent figure at this court was the Duchess of Shrewsbury, already mentioned. She was no favourite with the Princess, and it was only because the king had asked his daughter-in-law three times, that she was appointed to the office she held. One of the fairest of all the ladies at the new court was Mary Bellenden, whom Gay calls, 'Smiling Mary, soft and fair as down.' She had been appointed maid-of-honour to the Princess before the royal quarrel, but her mistress never looked on her with favour whilst she remained in her

service. Lady Cowper tells us that when she went to court one morning she found the Duchess of Roxburgh was not such a favourite as she had been, and that the Princess resented her recommending Mrs. (as was the habit of calling unmarried ladies in those days) Bellenden. The reason was obvious, the handsome and witty maid-of-honour soon attracted the eyes of His Royal Highness. In the 'Excellent New Ballad' describing the royal exit from the king's palace, already referred to, a verse is devoted to her :

' But Bellenden we needs must praise,
Who as downstairs she jumps,
Sings o'er the hills and far away,
Despising doleful dumps.'

Mary Bellenden did not, however, respond to the Prince's admiration, for the excellent reason that she was already in love with handsome Colonel Campbell, who, long years afterwards, became the fourth Duke of Argyle. They were both wise enough in their generation to keep their love a secret from the eyes of the Prince and the gossiping courtiers, and it was no less sweet for its secrecy. His Royal Highness did

not long hesitate about showing her he was enamoured of that beauty of which Pope and a host of minor poets had sung, and proceeded to prove his affection for her in a thoroughly gross and practical manner, quite in keeping with his character. In the drawing-rooms he would follow her about from place to place, undaunted by the plain speeches which she made him with her arms saucily crossed before her. The Prince was a persevering lover, and one evening sat down beside her and commenced reckoning out the gold which he felt sure would buy her love, glancing at her now and then as he paused in his occupation ; when she cried out, ‘ Sir, I cannot bear it : if you count your money any more I will go out of the room.’

George Augustus, however, had a supreme belief in the omnipotence of gold ; a faith that had probably come to him from experience, and he could not understand how the woman he honoured with his admiration, could be blind to the value of his coin, even if she had the misfortune to be so towards his personal attractions. Again he followed her round the drawing-room when opportunity offered, counting out his

money, until one day the high-spirited Bellen-den suddenly turned round on him, and, knocking the purse from his hand, flung his money on the floor, when she beat a hasty retreat, leaving His Royal Highness to go down on his knees and pick up his scattered treasure.

After this he came to the conclusion that, gold having failed to secure him her affections, they must already have been given in trust to some one else, whose name he sought to find out from her. Failing in this, he extracted a promise from her that she would not marry without his consent, and declared, if she pledged her word not to do so, that he would prove a friend to her future husband. She promised him readily enough, but reflecting, probably, that delays are dangerous, especially in courts, she went forthwith and married her lover, Colonel Campbell, Groom of the Bed-chamber to the Prince, and they kept their marriage secret for a while, both being in a degree dependent on their salaries received from the royal household. When they announced that they were man and wife, the Prince was wroth with Mary Bellenden. Being married, she could no

longer retain her post as maid-of-honour ; but Colonel Campbell, retaining his place, his wife came frequently to court, when George Augustus never lost an opportunity of following her round the room, upbraiding her for what he was pleased to call her falsity, and insulting her as far as he dared.

It was not until about forty years after his marriage that Colonel Campbell became Duke of Argyle, and meanwhile he and his wife had to manage their limited income as best they could. 'Oh, gad,' she wrote to a friend a few years after her marriage, 'I am so sick of bills : for my part, I believe I shall never be able to hear them mentioned without casting up my accounts—bills are *accounts*, you know.' During her life her name was never mixed up with any scandal, as was the fashion in those times. She became the mother of many children, and retired from town life in order to devote herself to their care ; one of them afterwards became the fifth Duke of Argyle. In her home in Kent the once beautiful maid-of-honour found employment which rendered her happier than waiting in court. 'It is well known to the whole

country,' she writes, 'that I have four fat calves, two fat hogs fit for killing, twelve promising black pigs, two young chickens, three fine geese, with thirteen eggs under each (several being duck eggs, else the others do not come to maturity)—all this, with rabbits and pigeons, and carp in plenty, beef and mutton at reasonable rates.'

A contemporary beauty of hers was the vivacious, brilliant, and equally fascinating Mary Lapell, whose charms were celebrated in verse by Pope, Gay, and Voltaire, and in prose by the fastidious Chesterfield and the satirical Horace Walpole. In an old ballad, supposed to be written from town to young ladies in the country anxious for news, she is likewise spoken of in connection with the beauty just mentioned.

'To you 't is my ballad comes,
To tell you tales of drawing-rooms :
What pranks are played behind the scenes,
And who at court the belle—
Some swear it is the Bellenden,
And others say La Pell.'

Both of these ladies were maids-of-honour whilst in their teens, Miss Lapell, indeed, being

only fourteen when she was appointed to that post. Both of them shared the doubtful honour of the Prince's admiration, and the coincidence between them was still further carried out in Mary Lapell being privately married, though whether she kept her nuptials a secret for the same reason as her friend it is impossible to say. The object of her choice was Lord Herve, afterwards Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Caroline, with whom he was a great favourite. From her husband's parents her union met with no opposition, as may be gathered from some letters of her father-in-law, the Earl of Bristol, written whilst the union was yet unknown to the public, and in which he congratulates her on her marriage, and calls her by 'the endearing title of daughter.' When the marriage was made known, it was celebrated by Lord Chesterfield and Mr. Pulteney in a ballad more remarkable for its flattery than delicacy, which they sent her under the name of a Grub Street poet, one of the class who levied a tax on the great whenever occasion offered; and she, believing it to originate from the man whose signature it bore, though not admiring its general

tone, sent him the usual fee. Only a few disconnected verses can be given of this ballad, which was an excellent sample of its class.

Venus is declared never to have seen

‘So perfect a beau and a belle,
As when Hervey the handsome was wedded
To the beautiful Molly Lapell.

‘Old Orpheus, the husband so civil,
He followed his wife down to hell ;
And who would not go to the devil
For sake of dear Molly Lapell ?

‘So powerful her charms, so moving,
They would warm an old monk in his cell.
Should the Pope himself ever go roaming,
He would follow dear Molly Lapell.’

Concerning these verses, Arbuthnot says, in writing to his friend Swift, ‘I gave your service to Lady Hervey. She is in a little sort of a miff about a ballad that was writ on her to the tune of “Molly Mog,” and sent her in the name of a begging poet. She was *bit*, and wrote a letter to the begging poet, and desired him to change the *doubles entendres* ; which the authors, Mr. Pulteney and Lord Chesterfield, changed into *single entendres*. I was against that, though I had a hand in the first. She

is not displeased, I believe, with the ballad, but only with being *bit*.*

The father of this young lady, celebrated whilst yet in her teens in song and story, was Brigadier-General Nicholas Lapell, who was styled Lord-proprietor of Sark, where his daughter was born, and where probably she in her early years acquired that French polish and manner which distinguished her through life. Lady Louisa Stuart says, in speaking of her, 'By the attractions she retained in age, she must have been singularly captivating when young, gay, and handsome; and never was there so perfect a model of the finely polished, high-bred, genuine woman of fashion. Her manners had a foreign tinge, which some called affected, but they were gentle, easy, dignified,

* Dean Swift writes to Dr. Tisdall: 'I'll teach you a way to outwit Mrs. Johnson. It is a new-fashioned way of being witty, and they call it a *bite*. You must ask a bantering question, or tell some damned lie in a serious manner, and then she will answer, or speak as if you were in earnest: and then cry you, "Madam, that's a bite." I would not have you undervalue this, for it is the constant amusement in court; and everywhere else amongst great people; and I let you know in order to have it obtain among you, and teach you a new refinement.'

and altogether extremely pleasing.' She was brilliant as a conversationalist, and generally clever. Lord Chesterfield said: 'She has been bred all her life at courts, of which she has acquired all the easy good breeding and politeness without the frivolousness. She has all the reading that a woman should have, and more than any woman need have; for she understands Latin perfectly well, though she wisely conceals it. No woman ever had more than she has *le ton de la parfaitement bonne compagnie, les manières engageantes, et le je ne sçais quoi qui plait.*'

That this accomplished woman used her talents for a beneficial purpose, we have it on the authority of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who had, by the way, no great love for her. Her Grace says that, when Molly Lapell came into life, her father made her a cornet in his regiment, which had a salary attached to it, that was duly paid her after she became maid-of-honour; when, it being rather absurd for her to hold her post in the Army any longer, Lord Sunderland obtained her a pension. It was soon after that her courage

and wit came to her aid, and suggested a scheme which she quickly carried out. Every night she attended the royal drawing-room she made a point of publicly attacking the King's Most Excellent Majesty; levelling the sharpest darts of her satire at his sacred but vulnerable person, 'insomuch as it was the diversion of all the town.' The boldness of her strokes began to gain publicity; courtiers tittered, and repeated her sallies. Loyalty was not strong enough to withstand amusement at her humour, until at last the Duchess of Kendal and the ministry became alarmed, and determined to purchase her silence, 'lest the king should be put into the opposers' hands.' They therefore gave her a bribe of £4,000, which had the desired effect. The belle became loyal to the reigning dynasty, bought a house, furnished it, and proclaimed her marriage. Her union was not one of perfect harmony. Both she and her husband had lived too long at court, and imbibed its tainted atmosphere, to be perfectly spotless, and he at least proved that his principles were as lax as they were fashionable.

A third maid-of-honour, which completes the group of these graces, was Sophia, daughter of General Howe, and grand-daughter of gay Prince Rupert and Peggy Hughes, the actress. Her court career commenced brilliantly enough, though her life ended in darkness and sorrow. Of all the goodly maids to be seen at Leicester House, she was the brightest, most daring, and, it must be said, the boldest. She laughed aloud at church, she jested with more than doubtful propriety, and soiled her lips in the drawing-room with much coarseness. She was fully imbued with the evil atmosphere of her surroundings, where the most sacred relationships of life were violated with ease, publicity, and even approval. She freely spoke her opinions on religion and morality with a daring carelessness that startled, but did not displease the flippant and degenerate throng of men and women around her.

Outside the bounds of court and town, Miss Howe was of opinion that life was not worth living. The brilliant circle of fine gentlemen and wits amongst whom she moved, had an attraction for her which, alas, proved fatal. A

couple of extracts from her letters will give the best clue to her mind and character. Writing to Mrs. Howard from Holt Forest, near Farnham, of which her father was ranger, she says, whilst spending a short vacation there, 'You will think, I suppose, that I have had no flirtation since I came here, but you will be mistaken; for the moment I entered Farnham, a man in his own hair, cropped, and a brown coat, stopped the coach to bid me welcome in a very gallant way; and we had a visit yesterday from a country clown of this place, who did all he could to persuade me to be tired of the noise and fatigue of a court life, and intimated that a quiet country one would be very agreeable after it, and he would answer that, in seven years, I should have a little court of my own.'

In another epistle she is anxious that Lord Lumley, Master of the Horse to the Princess of Wales, should send a coach to convey her back to the court; and threatens him, if he does not comply with her wishes, he shall have no more flirtations with her, though, 'perhaps,' she says, 'he may be glad of me for a *summer*

suit next year at Richmond, when he has no other business on hands.’

Whilst she was yet at Farnham, her grandmother, Peggy Hughes, died, when the maid-of-honour says, ‘The good lady’ (her mother) ‘put on her broad-girdled calico gown, and striped night-clothes, to look decent upon the death of her mother; that frill is a bad omen for me, for she always comes out with something dreadful when she is so adorned. She no sooner enters the room, with a face a thousand times more pale than you had, but she comes out with a fatal sentence, “that I might take this opportunity of staying here some time longer,” but hang me if I do, and, if that coach is not sent, I will come away in the waggon; that I am resolved upon. One good thing I have got by the long time I have been here, which is the being more sensible than ever I was of my happiness in being maid-of-honour. I won’t say, “God preserve me so” neither; that would not be so well.’

At court her beauty and wit attracted Nanty Lowther, Lord Lonsdale’s brother. This gay young gentleman was without honour or princi-

ple of any kind, but had all the grace, and charm, and heartlessness, and corruption of a true courtier. The brilliant, careless Sophia Howe fell in love, and left the court with him. Nanty Lowther never married her, and, after a little, the bright, vivacious girl died of a broken heart.

In Hanbury Williams's poem, 'The New Foundling Hospital for Wit,' Brigadier-General Churchill, who was a long-winded gossip that delighted in detailing a bit of scandal, is made to tell the story of the hapless Sophia.

'The general found a lucky minute now
To speak. "Ah, ma'am, you do not know Miss Howe.
I'll tell you all her history," he cried.
At this Charles Stanhope gaped extremely wide;
Dick Bateman hung his head; her Grace turn'd pale,
And Lovell trembled at th' impending tale.
"Poor girl! faith, she was once supremely fair,
Till worn by love, and tortured by despair,
Her pining face betrayed her inward smart,
Her breaking looks foretold her breaking heart.
At Leicester House her passion first began,
And Nanty Lowther was a pretty man;
But when the Princess did to Kew remove,
She could not bear the absence of her love:
Away she flew—" (interrupted by a footman's knock).'

So far as conduct went, Miss Meadows, ano-

ther maid-of-honour to the Princess, was a complete contrast to Sophia Howe. Miss Meadows' prudery was a common theme in the court; and her companion maids-of-honour made merry over her reserve. Pope, who had a word to say about almost every person, and everything notable at the time, makes mention of her in a somewhat foolish poem called, 'What is Prudery?' He answers:

'Tis a beldam,
Seen with wit and beauty seldom.
'Tis a fear that starts at shadows;
'Tis (no 't isn't) like Miss Meadows.'

This young lady has left few records of her court life behind; and, no doubt, what has been said of a nation being happy without a history holds good also concerning a maid-of-honour.

CHAPTER IX.

Courtiers at Leicester House—Mrs. Howard—Her appearance—She becomes Mistress of the Prince—Her Husband's Interference—Her Position at Court—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu at Leicester House—Dean Swift as a Courtier—'Assemblies Rage' in the Town—The Royal Children—The King's detestation of the Prince—Proposal of Lord Berkeley to make away with His Royal Highness—His Majesty's Ill-humour—Reconciliation of the King and Prince—Sir Robert Walpole and his Abilities—His Private Life and Power as a Statesman.

ONE of the most prominent ladies at the Prince's court was Mrs. Howard, whose name frequently occurs in the literature and gossip of the time, and who was perhaps one of the most common-place women that ever figured in court romance or intrigue.

She was the daughter of a baronet not very well-to-do in the world, and, when about twenty

years old, married the third son of an earl, Charles Howard, who was a worthless spend-thrift, with all the expensive tastes of a man of fashion, without his corresponding means. Early in their married life, perhaps when their love had become a little worn, they began to look about themselves and see what they had best do in order to secure a suitable position. Mrs. Howard was a clever, sagacious woman, qualities which her husband did not share, and it was probably to her the suggestion was due that they should face the rising sun, and go to the Court of Hanover to seek their fortunes. This was whilst Queen Anne reigned, and Sophia the Electress lived. Sophia was, at this time, most anxious to make friends with any of the English nobility, or their connections, who came to her court, and received Mrs. Howard very graciously, presenting her to the Hanoverian courtiers.

This was the first step, and Mrs. Howard determined to profit by it. She was wise enough to know, however, that, in order to engage the confidence of friends, it is necessary to appeal to the inner man, especially when the

outer man is a German. She therefore determined to give a dinner to the Hanoverian ministers. This scheme was well enough, but the money to put it into execution was not in her purse, nor had she the prospect of receiving any. Her affairs must have grown desperate when she came to the resolution of cutting off her hair, which was of great length and beauty, and selling it to the barber, hair being in those days of full-bottomed wigs a very valuable article. This had the desired effect of paying for the dinner. Soon after she became popular at the little court, where she got an appointment; and, when George Lewis was declared king, she was made Woman of the Bed-chamber to the Princess of Wales. This post she held until her husband succeeded to the Earldom of Suffolk, when she was raised to the office of Mistress of the Robes.

Her face was remarkable for a certain serenity of expression and regularity of features which almost gave her a claim to beauty. Her complexion was fair; her hair bright brown; her figure shapely, and inclined to stoutness. It was not by any personal attractions so much

as by the charm of her manner that she won, and was enabled to keep, the friendship of almost every man and woman of distinction that appeared at the courts of the first Georges.

She was at once courteous, discreet, kind, generous when opportunity offered, just and truthful. Her conversation was intelligent and sprightly, and her apartments at the palace were continually crowded, not only by the courtiers and wits, but by the men of learning who adorned the age. Horace Walpole, who became her intimate friend when she had retired from court, speaks of her as being ‘discreet without being reserved, and, from the propriety of her behaviour and love of truth, preserving uncommon respect to the end of her days.’

Archdeacon Coxe hath it that when the Prince made overtures to Mary Bellenden, and was rejected by that lady, he poured his disappointment into Mrs. Howard’s sympathetic ear, and finally became enamoured of her. That she became his mistress was speedily noised abroad, and her husband, hearing of it, came in great haste to St. James’s, where, in expectation of some recompense for the outrage done to his

honour, he made much ado. One night especially he went in a noisy manner into the quadrangle, and before the guards and those assembled vehemently demanded his wife, for making which request he was instantly turned about his business.

Soon after this he addressed himself to no less a personage than the Archbishop of Canterbury, and besought his Grace to use his spiritual influence and have his spouse restored to him ; whereon the Archbishop wrote a letter to the Princess asking her to comply with Mr. Howard's request, and have his wife sent home to him from court. Mrs. Howard, however, remained where she was, and her husband, still persevering in his claim, came to the Princess and declared he would take his wife out of her coach if he met her in it. Her Royal Highness bid him 'do it if he dare ; though,' said she, in speaking of it afterwards to one of her courtiers, 'I was horribly afraid of him (for we were *tête-à-tête*) all the while I was thus playing the bully. What added to my fear on this occasion was that I knew him to be so brutal, as well as a little mad, and seldom quite sober, so I did

not think it impossible but that he might throw me out of the window. But as soon as I got near the door, and thought myself safe from being thrown out of the window, I resumed my grand tone, and said I would be glad to see who should dare to open my coach door and take out one of my servants. Then I told him that my resolution was positively neither to force his wife to go to him, if she had no mind to it, nor keep her if she had.' Then Mr. Howard said he would complain to the king, but the Princess told him His Majesty had nothing to do with her servants; 'and for that reason he might save himself that trouble, as I was sure the king would give him no answer, but that it was none of his business to concern himself with my family.'

Notwithstanding the haughty tone taken by this complacent wife, it was feared that Mrs. Howard would be seized by her lord and master on the occasion of her going to Richmond when the Prince and Princess were moving there for the summer months. As a woman of the bed-chamber, etiquette did not permit her to sit in the royal carriage during the journey; she was

to follow in a coach, when it was thought the attempt to arrest her would be made. To prevent this two of her friends—John, Duke of Argyle, and his brother, the Earl of Islay—resolved to lend her their protection, and early on the morning of the day on which the journey was to be made they called for her in a coach belonging to one of them, and conveyed her to Richmond. A few months later, the Prince entered into an agreement with Mr. Howard, by which he consented to relinquish all claims to his spouse for the sum of twelve thousand a year.

Whether as mistress to the Prince or king (when George Augustus came to the throne), Mrs. Howard never sought to play a brilliant part, such as might be expected from one holding that position. She was satisfied with the regard of the many friends whom she had the talent of attracting, who treated her with the utmost respect, as if her life were altogether blameless. Outwardly, indeed, her conduct was most proper. Dean Swift, another of her friends, said of her ‘that for want of room to operate her private virtues might be folded up and laid by clean, like clothes in a chest, never to be put

on till satiety, or some reverse of fortune, should dispose her to retirement.'

Over George Augustus she had no influence, though the courtiers little suspected this, and daily flocked around her. Any power that she sought to obtain was quickly suppressed by the Princess, who never lost an opportunity of thwarting her designs, but in so subtle a manner that few suspected the fact. Caroline treated her husband's mistress in public with seeming forbearance and even friendship, and in private with a quiet contempt that must have made her sorely wince. Before the court she was addressed by the Princess as 'My good Howard,' but in the bed-chamber she was made to perform the most menial offices. In those days it was the custom for the woman of the bed-chamber to kneel after presenting the basin to the Princess, and remain in that position whilst she washed her hands. This Mrs. Howard rebelled against at first, and refused to comply with; but the Princess, who afterwards narrated the story, said to her, 'not in anger, but calmly as I would to a naughty child, "Yes, my dear Howard, I am sure you will; indeed you will. Go,

go; fie for shame! Go, my good Howard; we will talk of this another time.”’ The ‘good Howard’ was conquered, and never sought to rebel again. Afterwards the Princess told her they should be good friends, that she had not expected such treatment from her ‘when she knew I had held her up at a time when it was in my power, if I had pleased, at any hour of the day to let her drop through my fingers.’

Pope, who was an intimate friend of hers, gives a summary of her disposition in these words: ‘She means to do good, and does no harm, which is a vast deal for a courtier.’ By Gay and Addison, as well as the poet of Twickenham, she was regarded with most friendly feelings, and kept up a correspondence not only with these men of letters, but with most of the distinguished personages of the age. Many of the letters addressed to her are curious illustrations of the inflated epistolary style of the time; one penned to her by Lord Bristol will serve as a specimen of the general style. ‘The *bel esprit* your billet so abounds with,’ says his lordship, ‘thoroughly shows the man had some sense, who, conscious of the vast inferiority of

his own to yours, would prudently have waved a correspondence (that) must necessarily have exposed his insufficiency to maintain an equal with one whose style,

“ Like a delicious stream it ever ran
As smooth as woman, yet as strong as man.”

However, since the price we pay for pleasures should be proportionate to the satisfaction they afford us, I am now content, rather than have it discontinued, even to suffer the mortification I shall frequently feel in being so far surpassed in the beauties of diction as well as sentiment by that very woman you most unjustly abuse as simple.’

Perhaps one of the reasons which imparted the habitual expression of calmness to her face was her early deafness. Pope, alluding to this, coins a skilful compliment out of her calamity in saying,

‘ When all the world conspires to praise her
The woman’s deaf, and does not hear.’

If the sex in general were deaf to their own praises, it would be much better for themselves, if not happier for mankind. In writing of her affliction to Dean Swift, she exhibits her charac-

teristic patience. 'I hear you are melancholy,' she says, 'because you have a bad head. These two misfortunes I have laboured under these many years, and yet never was peevish with myself or with the world. Have I more philosophy and resolution than you, or am I so stupid that I do not feel the evil?' A story hangs by her deafness worth narrating. The surgeon most in favour at court in those days was Cheselden, who must have been after a fashion a clever and adventurous fellow. He happened to have a cousin under sentence at Newgate, whom he was anxious to serve; and one day, in speaking to Mrs. Howard of her deafness, he said he should like to try an experiment with a condemned convict who was deaf. If the man could be pardoned, he would operate on him for her benefit, and, if successful, the same treatment which had cured him would serve her likewise. Without much trouble, she obtained the required pardon; but no sooner was the convict liberated than Cheselden ceased to speak of the experiment. After a while it came to Mrs. Howard's knowledge that the man whose release she had gained was Cheselden's

cousin; when the surgeon fell into disgrace at court.

The records of her career as the king's mistress, and her retirement from court are connected with the reign of George II., in treating of which her name will occur again.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu not only went to St. James's, but, contrary to the regulations laid down, also visited at Leicester House, though at the latter court she was not to be seen so frequently, a fact for which the Princess of Wales did not like her the less. It was plain to see that the Prince admired this brilliant and chatty woman as much as his father did. On one occasion, whilst she was at the Leicester House drawing-room, he, with his characteristic bad taste, called his wife's attention to Lady Mary's becoming dress; when the Princess, with that habit of restraint which she had early learnt, replied, with a smile, 'Lady Mary always dresses well.' Probably Her Royal Highness took some opportunity of letting my lady know what she thought of her, a luxury she occasionally indulged in; for, as if in retaliation, Lady Mary left behind her a character of the Princess, in

which she describes her as possessing 'low cunning, which gave her an inclination to cheat all the people she conversed with, and often cheated herself in the first place, by showing her the wrong side of her interest, not having understanding enough to observe that falsehood in conversation, like red on the face, should be used very seldom and very sparingly, or they destroy that interest and beauty which they are designed to heighten.' By saying so much Lady Mary has laid the colours too glaringly on the picture for a true portrait.

Dean Swift also came to the Leicester House court when he returned to England from the country he abhorred, and stayed with his friend Pope at Twickenham. He said in a letter to the Duchess of Queensbury that 'a nameless person had sent him eleven messages before he would yield to a visit.' The 'nameless person' was the Princess, whom he visited probably on the twelfth invitation. The Dean seems to have been pleased with the result, for he afterwards said that the 'Princess retained her old civility;' an admission which, coming from him, meant much. Since he had last been to court,

he had published his famous 'Gulliver's Travels,' which had found its way to Leicester House as well as elsewhere, and caused a good deal of merriment at the court. The Princess had laughed heartily over the description of the Lilliputian heir who wore a high heel and a low one to his shoes; recognizing the Prince under the guise of this satire, who was at the time halting between the Whigs and Tories. When the Princess saw the Dean, she, in a humorous way, charged him with writing the book, which had been published anonymously. He answered her evasively, and said the ministry were angry with it; when she told him that both she and the Prince were well pleased with the 'Travels.' But the Dean was cautious, and did not trust her all in all, and told her, if she liked the volume so well, she might suppose it to be written by anyone she pleased; whereupon the Princess laughed, and the keen satirist bowed, and they entered into such friendly intercourse that my Lord Peterborough, who was looking on, said to a group of courtiers, 'Swift has now only to chalk his pumps, and learn to dance on the tight-rope, to be yet a bishop.'

To this minor court came Carr, Lord Hervey, and Charles Churchill, and the pale-faced, melancholy Lord Scarborough, now in the freshness of his manhood, whom madness, and death, inflicted by his own hand, were soon destined to overtake, and many other gay young men, who gave the reputation of wit and brilliancy to the Leicester House drawing-rooms. With the example of the court before it, the town became likewise gay. 'Assemblies rage,' says a correspondent of the period, 'and there is not a street in the fashionable quarter of the town free from them; and some spirited ladies go to seven of them in a night, when love and play flourish under such encouragements.'

In the summer months the Prince and Princess removed their court to Richmond, where the Prince had purchased the mansion of the exiled Duke of Ormond for £6,000 from the Commissioners of the Confiscated Estates Court. Richmond Wells, as the place was then called, on account of its springs, which were supposed to possess healthful properties, had become the fashion. Here a large house and assembly rooms were built, where public balls were held

regularly on Mondays and Thursdays, and bazaars and raffles on the other nights of the week. Then there were pleasure grounds open to the public, and Mr. Penketham, to add to the amusements the place afforded, opened a theatre on the green. This gentleman informed the public that 'he had formerly diverted the quality and gentry in Bartholomew Fair and Mayfair with dolls, and musick, and other delightful entertainments,' and he had now settled at Richmond for the season.

To Penketham's play-house went the Prince and Princess, with the maids-of-honour and fine gentlemen of the court, to the manager's great delight. Here the royal party witnessed the performance of 'The Busy Body,' and Sir Robert Howard's comedy, 'The Committee, or the Faithful Irishman,' which vastly amused them. Here the Prince's court was as gay as it had been in town, and almost as well attended, for the people of 'quality and fashion' came to the wells under the pretence of establishing their health, but, in reality, in pursuit of fresh pleasures.

But during these years spent in gaiety and

pleasure, the Prince and Princess were not without occasional anxiety and disappointment. The king, as already stated, was determined to have control of their three children, and to separate them from their parents, who, of course, rebelled against this decree, and were fearful as to what length His Majesty would proceed against them in revenge. The Prince claimed his children, when the king set the machinery of the law in motion, confident that its decisions would be agreeable to his wishes. Whilst the guardianship of the children was in dispute, nothing could be more painful than the grief and suspense which their mother felt. She cried night and day, complained bitterly that she had been betrayed, and said, 'I see now how all these things go; I must be the sufferer at last, and have no power to help myself. I can say since the hour I was born that I have not lived a day without suffering.' Surely it must have been a deep sense of bitterness that called forth this cry. The good Bishop of Norwich was touched by the mother's grief, and went down on his knees and swore that the Princess should have her children, not counting on the king's strength,

obstinacy, and determination to punish his son and 'cette diablesse Madame la Princesse.'

Walpole thought to throw oil on the troubled waters, and advised the Princess to write to the Duchess of Kendal to beg her interference on her behalf, when he said everything would go right in a short time; that the Princess must trust him and her friends, 'who must play their part to serve them, for the king was inexorable if ruffled, and they must seem to submit in order that they may work in an underhand way.' She listened to him patiently, but without much hope, and then cried out, 'Mr. Walpole, this is no jesting matter to me; you will hear of me and my complaints every day and every hour, and in every place, if I have not my children again.'

Finally the control of the royal Princesses came before the judges for decision. Chief Justice Parker gave it as his opinion that His Majesty had the sole right to educate and manage his grand-children, and that their parents had none but what was in accordance with his wishes. This decision was agreed to by nine other judges, but was strongly opposed by Lord Chancellor Cowper with great determination. As an

example of His Majesty's sense of justice, it may be mentioned that Lord Cowper, who the king had once said 'was the only man in England who had treated him with good manners whilst in his service,' was immediately deprived of his chancellorship, whilst Chief Justice Parker, for the evidence he gave of remarkable wisdom on this occasion, was soon afterwards created Earl of Macclesfield.

The Prince and Princess of Wales never forgave him, and soon after had an opportunity, which they did not neglect, of avenging the wrong he did them. It was pretty well known then that his lordship was not averse to bribes, and it was better known afterwards that his corrupt practices rendered his name a disgrace to the bench.

Such a man as this was not, as might be expected, without numerous enemies, whom his dishonesty had injured, all of whom were anxious to bring him to justice. Knowing the feelings in which he was held by the Prince, they soon took courage, and publicly accused him of malpractices, when he was speedily found guilty, and condemned to pay

a fine of £30,000. This he succeeded in doing by the mortgage of his estates. The king, however, believing that the Prince of Wales had caused the accusation to be made against him, resolved to checkmate His Royal Highness in his triumph, and promised to pay the fine for the Chief Justice, and actually did so in part, and would probably have paid the whole, but that death set a stop to his generous intentions.

The king now detested his son more than ever; for four years he had not spoken a word to him. The Prince's growing popularity, which he took every care to cultivate amongst those who hailed the coming king in preference to incurring his displeasure by siding with the reigning monarch, was bitter indeed to His Majesty. He must have given expression to his hatred pretty freely, or certainly it would never enter into any man's head to suggest a plan of making away with the Prince. This proposal was, however, made by the Earl of Berkeley, who calmly laid a scheme before the king, in which he offered to take his heir away to America, and, once there, this zealous advocate for His

Majesty's peace promised that His Royal Highness should be heard of never more. It is shocking to think that the king should have received such a proposal, and that he could, moreover, have retained the man who made it in his favour, and allowed him to continue in his service as First Lord of the Admiralty.

After the king's death, the new queen, in searching a cabinet belonging to him, discovered the paper which boldly made this proposal of making away with her husband. Lord Berkeley was beyond reach of the king's arm, and he lived for the latter part of his years and died abroad. It is worth noting that one of his ancestors had been guilty of a deed somewhat similar to that which he proposed to accomplish, inasmuch as one of the Lords of Berkeley had lent his aid to the murder of the first Prince of Wales of the Plantagenet House.

During his long quarrel the Prince was never seen at court; but the Princess went occasionally to beard the lion in his den, and when His Majesty was surrounded by courtiers, always anxiously on the watch for some new item of gossip or some fresh scandal, she would make a point of

addressing him, when the king was obliged to make her an answer. Count Broglio says in his correspondence, 'For some years past the king has not spoken a word to the Prince, nor the Prince to him. The Princess of Wales sometimes in public attacks the king in conversation; he answers her, but some, who are well apprised that His Majesty likes her no better than the Prince, have assured me that he only speaks to her on these occasions for the sake of decorum.'

The royal quarrel at length began seriously to affect the nation. The upholders of the reigning dynasty felt that the scandal reflected on their choice; whilst the Jacobite party were delighted to see how badly the king and his heir agreed, and came to have strong hopes that a house which was divided against itself could not stand. Disloyalty became more common daily, and Lord Sunderland said 'the king was so out of humour about the quarrel, that if the Pretender were in England he could cut them all down.'

There were other things, however, to make His Majesty feel rather ill at ease about this time, one of the principal of which was that he

had exceeded the liberal grant of the civil list by £550,000; he therefore determined to call on the Parliament to raise some measure which would pay that sum, and out of this scheme arose the infamous South Sea Company, which served His Majesty's purpose in more ways than one; as Horace Walpole assures us, it 'helped to settle the Hanoverian line on the English throne by diverting the national attention from the game of faction to the delirium of stock-jobbing.'

When this bubble, which Lord Cowper said 'was contrived for treachery and destruction,' burst, steeping the nation in misery, the king, good-humouredly, said, 'We have very good luck; we sold out last week.' He then left the kingdom when it was disturbed to its centre, and remained in Hanover until Walpole had devised some means of soothing the public mind.

Before proposals were received to lessen the debt already referred to, it was deemed advisable by the ministry to heal the royal quarrel if possible. The friends of both king and Prince were anxious that a reconciliation should take

place; but His Majesty remained obstinate and would not listen to such a proposal. His temper became so bad that the courtiers 'did not dare address him.' Lord Sunderland, however, ventured to speak to him on the subject, when he replied, angrily, 'Did you not promise to bring me the Prince bound hand and foot? And don't you bring him back without my having power to put any one servant in or out about his person.'

The Prince was not eager to submit to His Majesty, but after a while was prevailed upon to write him a letter; some words in this were taken objection to, but he refused to withdraw them, and matters stood still for a time. 'The resentment of the king,' says Archdeacon Coxe, 'was carried to such an extremity that, with a view to embarrass his son, he formed a resolution of obtaining an act of Parliament to compel him to resign his German dominions on his accession to the throne. With this view the opinion of the Lord Chancellor Parker, afterwards Earl of Macclesfield, was demanded, and a conference held to consider the legality and expediency of the scheme. The answer

given by the Chancellor fully put a stop to the measure as inexpedient and impracticable, and liable to be followed by very dangerous consequences.'

Meanwhile, the eldest of the royal children took ill, and her mother, who was only allowed to see them once a week, on every Sunday night, now sent and asked the king leave to see her daughter. Permission was given through one of the Turkish slaves, Mahomet, who said the Princess might visit, but she was not to bring either a doctor or physician with her. When she arrived at St. James's she was much alarmed to find her daughter had smallpox; and she came backwards and forwards every day whilst the illness lasted, staying from eleven o'clock until three, and from six to eleven. The young Princess was seriously ill, and continued in danger for some time.

One day, when the Princess was going to St. James's as usual, two letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury were put into her hands; one directed to herself, the other to Lord Sunderland, then in high favour with the king. The latter had been brought in by mistake

of the messenger, but no sooner did Her Royal Highness see to whom it was addressed than she determinedly broke the seal, and read it. Her curiosity was rewarded. She learned that the Archbishop requested permission of his lordship to visit Leicester House as often as he was sent for without troubling him again, as he might soon be sent for 'to do his duty by the afflicted mother.' His Grace's letter to the Princess simply expressed his desire to wait on her. The former letter she sent back to the messenger with word that she had opened it by mistake, a statement strictly untrue; then, turning away, she said, '*Voyez quel homme.*'

On St. George's Day, 1720, the Prince was induced to write another letter to the king, more submissive than the first; and this was borne by Lord Lumley, the Master of the Horse, to His Majesty. The result was that a private message was sent by the royal father to his son, who immediately called for his chair, and had himself conveyed to St. James's. On his way, he met the Princess in Pall Mall, who was returning from her child's sick-bed. She was

surprised to see him, and, thinking that he might have heard ill news, she stopped and asked him where he was going, when they had a few words of consultation on the hoped for reconciliation. When he went to the palace the Prince saw his father for about five minutes, when he made many apologies for the great grief he had caused His Majesty, but the king was so disturbed and excited that he could only stammer out '*votre conduite, votre conduite, sir.*' The audience was not satisfactory to either of them, but it was an indication to the court that the long-standing quarrel had been patched up; in further token of which, the Prince was accompanied by the royal guard when he returned to Leicester House.

Great rejoicings followed the event. As the Prince took his way between the Beefeaters, the people in the streets shouted, and at night Leicester Square was filled with the carriages of those who came to congratulate him. When Lady Cowper wished the Prince joy, he kissed her right heartily in the presence of his wife, who laughed, and cried out, '*I think you two always kiss upon great occasions.*'

The poetasters burst into song over the royal reconciliation, each rivalling the other in saying the finest things in the most pompous sentences, and all striving to earn a few shillings from their court patrons. Says one of these bards:—

‘So now our great, august, heroic prince
Pays low his mighty sire obedience,
Both gloriously united firmly stand,
Ev’n faction dies within a factious land.
Though late with clouds o’ercast this happy isle,
Britain and Europe now begin to smile.
Though fogs and mists obscure our hemisphere,
The noble planets now again appear.
The sun which long behind a cloud concealed
Was lately, shines with radiant beams revealed.
A Caroline at St. James’s seen,
Great is her virtue who is beauty’s queen ;
A prince whose wisdom in retirement shown,
I dare presage the future times shall own
Will make him glorious on a British throne ;
At this each loyal breast with transport beats,
Gives thanks to heaven, and the great joy repeats.’

But for all the fine things said on the occasion, the reconciliation was by no means thorough. When the king and Prince afterwards met, they neither exchanged words nor glances; nor could His Majesty be induced to see the Princess for some time; when he did it

was at a private interview, during which he angrily told her it was all owing to her that the Prince had not behaved himself.

The first night on which a drawing-room was held at St. James's after the peace there was a vast crowd of the friends of both the king and Prince, who crushed their way to see how the royal actors would go through their performance. Lately at the king's drawing-room there had been a very poor attendance, for St. James's had grown dull as the Leicester House parties grew brilliant; and sometimes there were only half a dozen ladies in the royal apartments to delight the king's gaze; but on this occasion every room was full. When the Prince and his friends came in, the king took no notice of them; nor did His Royal Highness or his clique make any advances towards His Majesty, but retired to the lower end of the drawing-room. It was rather a comical than an impressive sight. The charming Duchess of Shrewsbury, who had come in the Prince's train, was not at all satisfied with this state of things, and made bold to address the king's most excellent Majesty; but, there being none so deaf as those who will not

hear, the king proved very bothered indeed on this occasion. But the Duchess, being a woman of determination, resolved to be heard, and said, in a whining voice, ‘*Je suis venue, Sire, pour faire ma cour, et je la veux faire.*’

By-and-by Walpole comes to the Prince and asks him to send a polite message to the king, but the Prince, who could be as stubborn as his father, refused to comply with the minister’s wishes, whereon that wily man said, if he would not, he would frame such a one as was fit for him to send, and deliver it in his name.

Speaking of that memorable drawing-room, Lady Cowper says: ‘The whole thing looked like two armies drawn up in battle array; for the king’s court was all at the top of the room behind the king, and the Prince’s court behind him. The Prince looked down, and behaved prodigious well. The king cast an angry look that way every now and then, and one could not help thinking ’twas like a little dog and a cat—whenever the dog stirs a foot, the cat sets up her back, and is ready to fly at him. Such a crowd was never seen, for not only curiosity, but interest, had brought it together.’ Though

the Princess was not present on this night, a short time afterwards she went to court, on the occasion of the king's birthday. A passage in the diary just quoted from, says: 'In the morning we waited on the Princess at court, where was one of the greatest crowds I ever saw. At night we all went in the same train. The Duke of Newcastle (Lord Chamberlain) had got drunk for our sins; so the Princess's ladies had no places, but stood in the heat and crowd all the night. The Duchess of Shrewsbury downright scolded aloud about it, and he told her for conclusion, that places were provided for the Princess's family, which they did not keep, but that ladies of the town came and took them. 'Twas not his fault, and he could not turn out the ladies of the town for us. There was so great a crowd, and we were so ill-used, that four of us went away, and left only Lady Dorset in waiting. It was plain we were to be used thus; and I am almost tempted to think it was also one of the doughty articles of reconciliation.'

The Prince continued to live at Leicester House, where his court was maintained, and

where his drawing-rooms were not less brilliant than before.

Walpole, who held considerable influence over the king, was the principal agent in bringing about this patched-up peace between the royal father and son. When His Majesty landed in England, Walpole, who had shown his zeal for the House of Brunswick during the agitation which disturbed the last months of Queen Anne's reign, was appointed Paymaster of the Forces, whilst his brother-in-law, Lord Townshend, was made Secretary of State. Some changes being made in the ministry in the following year, he was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. His position was one of extreme difficulty. A large percentage of the Parliament, the country, and even the courtiers, were Tories and Jacobites; the king was a foreigner to the language, habits, and manners of the nation, and had surrounded himself by a band of Hanoverians, who sought to influence him and rule for their own benefit; so that it was only by the most skilful policy and sound judgment that the minister con-

trived to steer clear of the quicksands which beset him, and save his country from the dangers of civil war with which it was threatened. This he did unaided by the king, and closely hampered by the royal favourites; and during the years that he afterwards filled the same office, he, by his wise counsel, his moderation, his easy good-humour, his ready forgiveness of foes and faithful remembrance of friends, his tolerance, his steady resistance to injustice, governed England with an ability and faithfulness which she had rarely known before.

He had but little love for court life, save where it was connected with the affairs of state; and in dealing with those he could adopt an address which was not only persuasive, but almost irresistible. When he could make good his escape from the business of his office, he threw care to the winds, and, with the vivacity of a schoolboy out for a holiday, went down to his beagles at Richmond, or to enjoy some rural sport at Houghton, the family seat of the Walpoles. In private life he was convivial, delighted in coarse humour, and no man better enjoyed a hearty dinner, or a bottle of good wine. At

heart he was always more of a country squire than a great statesman ; and no matter how the tide of politics ran, when his despatches were brought to him, his gamekeeper's letter was the first which he invariably opened. His appearance was florid and cheery, his figure tall and burly ; in general aspect he resembled a gentleman farmer of strong sporting proclivities. In later life he became corpulent, a fact which caused George II. to style him '*le gros homme*.' In dress he was exceedingly simple, and in disposition as gallant as the most immoral beau of that licentious age.

He cared not at all for reading or writing, but his keen intellect quickly fathomed men's minds, and his knowledge of humanity was great ; nor did he entertain a high ideal of it. 'Few men,' he once said, 'should be ministers, for it let them see too much of the badness of mankind.' Perhaps the most remarkable trait in his character was his determination, which gloried in steering through difficulties and overcoming opposition ; and probably no better clue to his thoroughness can be found than his saying, 'If I had not been Prime Minister, I

should have been Archbishop of Canterbury.'

When he reached his twenty-fourth year, he married Catherine Shorter, the daughter of a Kentish squire, who was one of the most beautiful and clever women of the day. Her manners were charming and vivacious; her conversation witty, and she soon became one of the attractions of the court. Her fascination, if she sought to exercise it over her husband, was not, however, sufficient to keep his fancy from straying to fresh maids and faces new; and, in a few years, she found herself neglected by him, but surrounded by courtiers who, when her husband was in power, found a double attraction in her presence.

The great minister took little care to conceal his amours from his wife; and she, either from indifference, or because it was the fashion of the times, gave him but little trouble on the subject of his conjugal unfaithfulness, satisfying herself with the admiration of the courtiers in general, who invariably flocked about her, and of Carr, Lord Hervey, eldest son of the first Earl of Bristol, in particular. This courtier was said, by those who were well versed in evil

ways, to be the father of Horace Walpole, who afterwards became a celebrity. To give colour to this statement, it was noticed, as the boy grew up, that in appearance, manners, and disposition he was strikingly like the eccentric race from which he was popularly supposed to spring, and unlike Sir Robert Walpole, who treated him with marked neglect until such time as his natural cleverness became apparent at Eton, when a friend of the family remarked that, 'whether the lad had any right to the name he went by or not, he was likely to do it honour.'

Lord Townshend, who was called, 'one of the most unblemished statesmen and respectable gentlemen of the age,' was closely connected with Walpole's administration. He had taken for his second wife Dolly Walpole, his colleague's sister, who was remarkable for her personal beauty. The Walpoles and the Townshends had for generations been friends and neighbours, and this strengthened the bond which bound the statesmen for many years of their lives. When, in 1717, Lord Townshend resigned, Walpole followed his example,

and, requesting an audience with the king, tendered him the seals of office. His Majesty had not expected this, and refused to accept his resignation. But Walpole, who considered himself badly treated by his party, was firm in his determination, and laid the seals on the table, when the king took them, and placed them in his hat, assuring him the while of his high opinion of his conduct and abilities. Walpole held firm to his purpose.

The minister's brother, who was waiting in the next room, says the king put the seals into Sir Robert's hat no less than ten times, and when he came out, 'the heat, flame, and agitation, with the water standing in his eyes, appeared so strongly in his face, and indeed all over him, that he affected everybody in the room; and 'tis said that they that went into the closet immediately, found the king no less disordered.' It was not until three years after this that he again held office, when he was appointed Paymaster-General of the Forces, and soon after succeeded to his former position of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

His skill and ability as a statesman have been

already referred to ; Count Broglie writes to the Court of France that ‘Mr. Walpole and Lord Townshend possess an unbounded influence over the king and the Duchess of Kendal ; they enjoy the whole power of the government and the entire confidence of the king.’ And again the ambassador says, ‘The king cannot do without him’ (Walpole) ‘on account of his great influence in the House of Commons, where he depends entirely upon him in every respect.’

His name will again occur in these pages in connection with the reign of George II.

CHAPTER X.

London Town under George I.—Some Playwriters, Poets, and Journalists—Tonson, the Publisher—Little Mr. Pope among the Booksellers—Some wicked Taverns—Gin Shops—Coffee and Chocolate-houses—Dryden at 'Wills'—Addison at 'Buttons'—The 'Guardian' and 'Spectator'—Clubs and their Origin—The Kit-cat and its Members—Sir Godfrey Kneller—Swift and the October Club—The Scribblers' Club—Pope's Farewell to Town—Lighting of the City—Captain Fitzgerald and his Lady-love—Dissipation and Irreligion—Bill for the Suppression of Vice.

LONDON town was a curious old place during the reign of George I. Its streets were mostly narrow, rough, and unpaved, so that in wet or dirty weather the loose stones splashed mud on the brocaded garments of the fine ladies and gentlemen who trod on them. Close by the footpaths were cartloads of fruit, for which the vendors, with dice-boxes in their

hands, called on the people to gamble. The thoroughfares were crowded with sedan chairs—there were four hundred of them licensed at this period—some of them with the arms of a noble family emblazoned on them, carried by servants in rich liveries, and preceded by lackeys that step forward with the airs, if not the graces, of French dancing-masters. There are also hackney coaches, with their many-caped drivers—infamous rascals most of them, who for a consideration would play into the hands of the thieves with which the City swarmed, for the purpose of ridding people of their guineas as they rode home at night.

Here we are in Fleet Street, if you please, with its rows of small crowded shops, its curiously-shaped gable-ended houses, with overhanging bow windows, the fronts mostly covered with carvings in old oak, or designs stamped in plaster, and some of them with the showy escutcheons of families who were patrons of the establishments bearing them.

In the windows of most of the shops are books, pamphlets, and sheets of ballads fresh from the press, exposed for sale. Pass-

ing up and down and lounging about are a host of threadbare, nameless pamphleteers and obscure scribblers, who are ready to write verses at so much a line for a death or a birth, for Whig or for Tory, for Guelph or Stuart, with equal ease. They live a pitiful, hand-to-mouth existence, and are ever waiting till something turns up which will give inspiration to their muse and bread to their stomachs. But there are others here besides these poets 'ragged and forlorn'—men who flirt with, rather than steadily woo, 'the sacred nine,' and occasionally make them handmaidens to their political projects.

This man walking by the 'White Horse Tavern,' whose coat is somewhat finer than the habits of those he passes, is honest Samuel Garth; not only his garb, but his gait likewise, proclaims him a physician. The doctor can occasionally enjoy a bottle of good port, tell a capital story, and make himself as jovial as any man. He writes, too, good vigorous English, which is appreciated by Pope and Congreve, and other lights of the town, and has now been just arranging with his publisher about getting out his 'Prologue designed for Tamerlane.'

That middle-aged, thin man, with the dark complexion, who is with him, is the great journalist and famous author of 'Robinson Crusoe.' He is a shrewd, restless-looking fellow; there is much nervous energy expressed in his spare features, and a twinkle of kindly humour in his grey eyes, which turn from time to time to Dr. Garth's face, watchful of the effect of his quick-spoken, voluble words.

The man who advances to meet them with a smile on his face has that jaunty, happy-go-lucky air which at once proclaims him an Irishman. He is none other than Charles Molloy, B.L., the author of half a dozen comedies, who, getting but few briefs entrusted to his charge, has turned to literature, as so many others in like circumstances have since done. He is the editor of *Common Sense*, a weekly journal not always so valuable as its name indicated, but to which my Lord Chesterfield contributed under the *nom-de-plume* of 'Eudasia.' It is also whispered that most of those spicy articles in 'Fogg's Journal' are from the pen of this versatile Hibernian. When his farce 'The Half-pay Officer' was produced at the

Lincoln's Inn Fields play-house, he got old Peg Fryer, who had played before Charles II., to take the part of Lady Richlove. Peg was, as may be gathered from her Christian name, a countrywoman of his own, and was anxious for his success. So the honest old soul came back to the stage after an absence of fifty years, she being in her eighty-fifth year, and played her part right well. Peg gained the applause of a vastly crowded house, and she was full proud of the favour it showed her. When the performance was over, the audience would have her out again, for the bills promised she would dance a jig; but, when she came forward in response, the artful old dame seemed tottering from fatigue and ready to fall, and made believe she must go off the boards. But the music suddenly striking up an Irish jig, she quickly straightened herself and danced it with as light a foot as if she had been twenty, to the great delight of the house.

At the opposite side of the street is Parnell the poet,

‘ With softest manners gentlest arts adorn'd,
Blest in every science, blest in every strain.’

He has his head down and walks with a shuffling

gait, passing unnoticed in his abstraction a crowd at the end of the street that is making merry over a mountebank who calls himself Hightre-hight. This ingenious man swallows burning coals, licks a red-hot poker, and performs various wonders for the benefit of those around him. In the very middle of the crowd is the lusty Christopher Bullock, the lover of all street sights. He is both an actor and an author, though not quite an honest one, as may be judged from the fact of his stealing the plot and situation of a play of Richard Savage's which the unfortunate poet had submitted to him for approval, and which the sturdy Bullock dished up and produced as original under his own name ; such things being known in those days. Coming out of the 'Duke of Marlborough's Head' is a care-worn, pale-faced man, rather stooped and white-haired, and having a scholarly air. He is Robert Wilde, who wrote one play in the reign of Charles II., and that play was damned ; from that hour he became what he remained to the end—a disappointed man. The beau who is crossing the street is Vanbrugh, who cannot forget, nor is inclined to let his friends forget, that he has been

in the army, though he has now turned architect, manager to a theatre, and play-writer, in which capacity he has set the whole town laughing at the sprightliness of his wit. Mr. Vanbrugh is in full dress to-day, and has on his white, flowing wig, a coat without a collar, adorned with raised hair buttons, cut square in front, with loose hanging sleeves. His waistcoat is of a bright colour with great flaps, and the lace ruffles round his throat and wrists are excessively fine. By the way he steps one knows the wit and fine gentleman is proud of his small feet encased in square-toed, short-quartered shoes with large tongues and silver buckles. There is Tonson the publisher's shop, where the first cheap edition of Shakespeare's works were published; he is a merciless little man who made his money out of struggling authors, the same who refused poor Dryden a paltry loan, for which incivility the poet repaid him by handing down to posterity his portrait in three magnificent lines.

‘ With leering look, bull-faced, and freckled fair,
With two left legs and Judas coloured hair,
And frowsy pours that taint the ambient air.’

It was in Tonson's shop, some chroniclers say,

that Wycherley was standing one day when my Lady Drogheda stepped in and asked for the 'Plain Dealer,' hearing which a friend of the author's who was by pushed him forward and said, 'Madame, here is the "Plain Dealer," if you want him.' Whereon Wycherley made a profound bow, and my lady smiled on him, he being a remarkably handsome man, and declared she was happy to know Mr. Wycherley, in reply to which he said something very fine. So a friendship was established between them, which by-and-by was strengthened by marriage. Close by is William Sandby's shop, whence were issued so many Tory pamphlets, and other publications and squibs defamatory to the Whigs. Not far from the Temple stands Linton's house, the friend and publisher of Pope, who used to boast that he could, 'by the aid of a beef dinner and plain pudding, make the hungry critics see more beauty in any book he published than ever the author dreamt of.' In Linton's house it was that Pope first met Warburton, who afterwards became his sincere friend.

The author of the 'Rape of the Lock' was often to be seen in Fleet Street among the

publishers making a shrewd bargain when he had aught to dispose of, saying sharp things all the while in a peevish, discontented manner, and assuring all who would listen to him that if he were to begin the world again, and knew as much as he did, he would never write a line.

Let us walk through the Strand towards Pall Mall. What wonderful signs are swinging above the tavern doors! Almost every figure that an artist's imagination can suggest is painted in glowing colours on them: boars, hogs, and cocks having a decided preference. With every breeze they swing on their rusty hinges, and on windy days threaten the skulls of those who pass below. Wicked taverns they are, too, some of them, where duels are fought, oftentimes at a moment's notice, and where men kill each other for little more than pastime. There is the 'Queen's Head,' where but a night or two ago Cornet Castine was in company with Mr. Moore, a worthy gentleman, and son to a late M.P. in Ireland, who dropped a few words concerning Chancellor Phips, which the cornet resenting, gave him very abusive language, upon which Mr. Moore walked out

into the yard, and the other followed him, and without any provocation from Mr. Moore, or offering to draw his sword, the cornet drew his and ran him into the breast, which in the opinion of the surgeons was likely to prove mortal.' The 'White Lion,' another tavern, has gained a certain reputation for gaiety. Even in the days of the second Charles it had been known as a place of diversion, and it not only kept up but excelled its old repute in the reign of George I. Under the pretence of assisting at a 'concert of musick,' ladies came here in great numbers in cloak and mask, and the gallants betrayed an equal appreciation for the sweet sounds discoursed under the roof of the 'White Lion.' It was noticed by the neighbours that these 'concerts' ended with riotousness and greater gaiety than usually attended such assemblies; and it happened that a posse of constables slipped in one night, and, unmasking the fair ones, discovered some ladies of distinction, who were sent home, whilst the other ladies, also of distinction, were conducted to Bridewell. In general these taverns were no better than Pagan shrines, where Bacchus and Venus were ardently worshipped.

At the 'Mitre' in St. James's Market, the unfledged genius of Mrs. Oldfield, afterwards the most famous actress of her time, was discovered. Her mother kept the tavern, and Anna, who at this time was a good little wench, served the customers. One day when she was behind the bar, reading aloud Fletcher's comedy of 'The Scornful Lady,' in a clear, musical voice, George Farren stepped in, and noticed that she emphasised the right points, and laughed at the proper places. So it entered into his head that this girl had some dramatic genius, and he advised her mother to put her on the stage, when Anna became an actress at the age of sixteen, and played for thirty years afterwards.

Besides the temptations which taverns held forth, there were gin-shops, each with its painted board informing the public that they might 'get drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence, and have straw to lie upon for nothing,' each house having a cellar where those who availed themselves of the delights offered to them might wallow. When eventually the government sought to put down these houses with the strong hand of the law, that portion of the

populace which made use of them became outraged, and used the war-cry, 'No gin, no king.'

The coffee and chocolate houses of Old London were places of entertainment around which a certain air of romance hovers. They numbered about two thousand in all, and were frequented by men of all professions and of all grades in the social scale. The entrance price was usually a penny, which entitled the depositor of that coin to sit and hear the news and gossip of the day, to listen to the fly-sheet papers read aloud, or take part in any discussion going on. The sum of twopence added the addition of a cup of coffee to the aforesaid delights, and the climax to the pleasures of the hour was reached by permission to smoke a pipe on the premises.

Baron Pollnitz says, in giving his impressions on England at this period, 'Tis a sort of rule for the English to go once a day at least to houses of this kind' (coffee houses), 'where they talk of business and news The chocolate house in St. James's, where I go every morning to pass away the time, is always so full that a man can scarce turn about in it.

Here are dukes and other peers mixed with gentlemen; and to be admitted there needs nothing more than to dress like a gentleman.' For those who were not dukes, or peers, or gentlemen, or did not dress like gentlemen, there were other coffee and chocolate houses, frequented by the majority of members of one or other of the professions, or by customers linked together by some common tie. Scotchmen were wont to gather at 'Forrest's,' and Frenchmen at 'Giles's.' 'Garraway's' and 'Jonathan's' were the favourite resorts of the honest citizens, who, over their social cups, talked of shares and bonds, and merchandise generally; and black-coated parsons were to be found in great numbers at 'Truby's' or 'Child's,' close by St. Paul's Churchyard, whilst the 'Old' or 'Young Men's' was given up to the society of the country's gallant defenders.

One of the most famous of these houses of entertainment was 'Wills,' rendered celebrated by being the haunt of the great Dryden; and here it was he gathered around him the wits and men of letters and culture of his day. In the principal room of 'Wills,' there was a great

arm-chair specially reserved for 'the old man venerable,' which, during the winter, was placed by the fire-side, and, during the summer, in the balcony, and these spots he used to refer to as his winter and summer residences. In the great room at 'Wills,' common to all, the old man, grown garrulous in his latter days, would talk to any chance visitor who interested him, and tell anecdotes of blind John Milton, whom he had known, and of all the rare events which had happened during his life. Two men, whose names afterwards became famous, first saw Dryden at 'Wills,' one of whom was Alexander Pope, then about twelve years of age, who, at his entreaty, was brought by Sir Charles Wogan from the Forest of Windsor for this purpose; the other being Dean Lockier, who has fortunately left us his first impressions of the poet, whom Colley Cibber used to speak of as 'a decent old man.'

The Dean says, 'I was about seventeen when I first came up to town, an odd-looking boy, with short, rough hair, and that sort of awkwardness which one always brings up at first out of the country with one. However, in spite

of my bashfulness and appearance, I used now and then to thrust myself into "Wills," to have the pleasure of seeing the most celebrated wits of that time who then resorted thither. The second time that ever I was there, Mr. Dryden was speaking of his own things, as he frequently did, especially of such as had been lately published. "If anything of mine is good," says he, "'tis 'Mac Flecnœ,' and I value myself the more upon it, because it is the first piece of ridicule written in heroics." On hearing this, I plucked up my spirit so far as to say, in a voice just loud enough to be heard, "that 'Mac Flecnœ' was a very fine poem, but that I had not imagined it to be the first that was ever writ that way." On this, Dryden turned short upon me, as surprised at my interposing; asked me how long "I had been a dealer in poetry," and added, with a smile, "Pray, sir, what is it that you did imagine to have been writ so before?" I named Boileau's "Lutrin" and Tassoni's "Secchia Rapita," which I had read, and knew Dryden had borrowed some strokes from each. "'Tis true," said Dryden. "I had forgot them." A little after Dryden went out, and, in going,

spoke to me again, and desired me to come and see him the next day. I was highly delighted at the invitation; went to see him accordingly, and was well acquainted with him after as long as he lived.'

Button's coffee-house, 'over against Toms' in Covent Garden,' was rendered fashionable in later years by Addison and his followers. Button had been a servant to the Right Honourable Joseph, who drew the wits and men of letters here that before were wont to meet at Wills'. Honest Richard Steele, and witty Congreve, and Budgell, and Tickle, and Phillips, all excellent fellows too, and many others of lesser note, delighted to assemble at Button's. It was here that Phillips, when smarting from the pain of Pope's flagellation on his pastorals, stuck up a great rod in the common room, which he vowed to exercise on the rival poet whenever that diminutive gentleman made his appearance there. On the front door, Addison fixed a lion's head, which served as a letter-box, down which the scribblers were invited to slip their effusions, which were afterwards supposed to serve as a text for those delightful essays by

Addison, and Pope, and Steele, and Parnell regarding the town, which afterwards appeared in the *Guardian*. 'This head,' says a letter in that journal, 'is to open a most wide and voracious mouth, which shall take in such letters and papers as are conveyed to me by my correspondents, it being my resolution to have a particular regard to all such matter as come to my hands through the mouth of the lion. There will be under it a box, of which the key will be kept in my own custody, to receive such papers as are dropped into it. Whatever the lion swallows I shall digest for the use of the publick.' And in another letter there is a description of the head from Addison's pen, in which he tells us that it is reckoned an excellent piece of workmanship, and was designed by a great hand in imitation of the antique Ægyptian lion, the face of it being compounded out of that of a lion and a wizard. The lion, he furthermore announces, is planted on the western side of the coffee-house, holding its paws under the chin, upon a box, which contains everything that he swallows. He begs of his readers to diet the animal on wholesome and substantial

food, but desires that they will not gorge him either with nonsense or obscenity, and insists that his mouth may not be defiled with scandal.

Toms' coffee-house was within a stone's throw of the rival houses of entertainment, and it was whispered that within its walls play was carried on frequently until the small hours of morning; and there government ministers and members of the Upper House did not disdain to come and have a chat with the frequenters of Toms', indulge in a cup of coffee, and have a look at the latest foreign 'prints,' as the illustrated journals were then called, and the 'whimsical newspaper called the *Tatler*.' Toms' was a house where people are all 'too polite to hold a man in discourse by the button,' a habit that Steele makes merry over in the *Guardian*, giving at the same time a picture of the frequenters of this place of entertainment.

'There is a silly habit,' he writes in No. 84 of the *Guardian*, 'among many of our minor orators who display their eloquence in the several coffee-houses of this fair city, to the no small annoyance of considerable numbers of Her Majesty's spruce and loving subjects, and that is

a humour they have got of twisting off your buttons. These ingenious gentlemen are not able to advance three words till they have got fast hold of one of your buttons; but as soon as they have procured such an excellent handle for discourse, they will proceed with great elocution. I know not how well some may have escaped, but for my part I have often met with them to my cost; having, I believe, within these three years past been argued out of several dozen; insomuch that I have for some time ordered my tailor to bring me home with every suit a dozen at least of spare ones, to supply the place of such as from time to time are detached as a help to discourse, by the vehement gentlemen before mentioned. This way of holding a man in discourse is much practised in the coffee-houses within the city, and does not, indeed, so much prevail at the politer end of the town. It is likewise more frequently made use of among the small politicians than any other body of men . . . In the coffee-houses here about the Temple you may harangue even among our dabblers in politics for about two buttons a day, and many times for

less. I had yesterday the good fortune to receive very considerable additions to my knowledge in state affairs, and I find this morning that it has not stood me in above a button.'

The Coco-tree, the St. James's, and the Smyrna were famous houses in their day, and were all frequented by busy politicians, the first of these being a rendezvous for the Tories, as the St. James's was for the Whigs. Together with the crowd of gallants, and intriguing courtiers, and busy statesmen that thronged the coffee-houses in and about Covent Garden, came a host of nameless pamphleteers and scribblers who wrote verses to suit the subject of the hour. To them a coffee-house was a blessed haven, where they could sit in some obscure corner and, unnoticed, hear the great men engage in literary or political warfare, and perhaps pick up some scraps of thought which they would swiftly make away with to stew up in a nauseous drivel and dish as a piece of originality fresh from their own brains.

These coffee-houses, used for the purpose of friendly intercourse and interchange of ideas, were the fore-runners of modern clubs, and were

indeed clubs in all but the name. As time went on, however, it was deemed advisable that some house in particular should be assigned for the meeting of those engaged in similar occupations or agreeing in politics, where, uninterrupted by the supporters of other factions, they might discuss their opinions. For this latter purpose the Kit-cat club was established in the time of Queen Anne; and it continued until the first year of George II.'s reign. The house selected for the meetings of these genial spirits who formed the club was situated in Shire Lane, at the 'Sign of the Cat and Fiddle,' and was kept by a pastry-cook rejoicing in the nomenclature of Christopher Kat; from which it is supposed the club took its name. Pope, in an epigram which he wrote in 1716, says :

' Whence deathly kit-cat took its name
Few critics can unriddle;
Some say from pastry-cook it came,
And some from cat and fiddle.
' From no trim beau its name it boasts,
Grey statesmen or green wits,
But from this pell-mell pack of toasts
Of old cats and young kits.'

Christopher, otherwise Kit, concocted excel-

lent pies, which were the pride of their maker and the delight of the members of the club who dined at his house on special nights according to rule; and to these savoury delicacies were given the name of the club. The members consisted of Whig noblemen and gentlemen anxious for the succession of the House of Hanover, amongst whom were the Dukes of Somerset, Grafton, Richmond, Devonshire, Marlborough, Sutherland, Manchester, Whar-ton, and Kingston, who assembled here to protest against the Tories, eat mutton pies, drink some good bottles of wine, sing songs, tell good stories, toast the women they admired and maidens fair to see, and enjoy themselves thoroughly in an age when enjoyment was an art.

By-and-by, when there was no more need to fear for the safety of the House to which they had attached themselves, the club grew less exclusive, and, besides men of high degree, Addison, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Dr. Garth, and Walsh were admitted. All these men had distinguished themselves, principally in literature, and the humour and pleasantry with which their conversations were fraught made them valuable

additions to the weekly dinner-table. Wit, which in this age gave a colouring to social life, had its birth at such re-unions; and at the Kit-cat board in later times the gravity of political life and party warfare was laid aside to listen to the humorous narration of some love stratagem, or the adventures of some gallant, or other occurrences that were always found amusing, though occasionally savouring of more broadness than good taste sanctioned. When the club had been some years established, two dissipated men, Lord Mohun and the Earl of Berkeley were admitted, to the great grief of Tonson the secretary, who declared it would now be ruined; and when one day Lord Mohun broke the gilded emblem of the top of his chair, Tonson said the man who would do that would cut a throat. In this instance the good secretary, who had the forms of conventionality much at heart, was not far wrong, for my Lord Mohun was a famous duellist, and had dispatched a number of men, if not by the means which Tonson hinted at, by another which was equally successful. Members who were a greater ornament to the club were Lord Dorset,

‘the grace of courts, the muses’ pride,’ Lords Halifax and Essex, Walpole and Sir Richard Steele.

The walls of this club must have heard some rare and humorous sayings fall from the lips of these wits, poets, and politicians, who could be right jovial when they came together, and warmed under the influence of old wine and good-fellowship. When once they met at the table of the Kit-cat they were somewhat loth to part, and sometimes the grey light of early morning looked in and saw the ‘merrie companie’ over their revels. Sir Robert Walpole was never more at home than here, where he told his best stories to appreciative friends amidst roars of laughter, and drank bottle after bottle of honest port. Vanbrugh kept his wittiest tales for the Kit-cat table, Congreve his broadest humour, Dorset his politest speeches; and here honest Richard Steele got drunk early, and was generally found under the table when his friends were hastening to their sedan-chairs.

Once he told Dr. Garth that his time was too valuable to waste at the Kit-cat meetings whilst his patients waited for him. ‘Nay, nay, Dick,

that's no great matter after all,' said the Doctor, pulling out a list of fifteen patients from his fob; 'nine of them have such bad constitutions that not all the physicians in the world could save them, and the other six have such good constitutions that not all the physicians in the world could kill them.' At this answer the members round the table laughed right heartily, and Dick Steele, amid cheers, proposed the patients' health. On one occasion, the celebration of King William's birthday, Sir Richard brought my Lord Bishop of Bangor with him, when the 'immortal memory' was drunk. A mad hatter, one John Sly, who had stolen into the room on his knees in the old cavalier fashion, 'drank the Orange toast in a tankard of foaming October.' Steele whispered to the bishop, 'Laugh, do laugh—it is humanity to laugh.' Soon after this the learned divine took up his hat and gravely went his way. When, in the early hours of morning, Steele was picked up from under the table and tumbled into a sedan chair, he insisted on the carriers taking him to the bishop's palace, in order that he might apologise to his lordship, and only by

the force of great persuasion could he be induced to go home, and defer his excuses until the following day. When morning came, he freely tendered them in the couplet :

‘Virtue with so much ease on Bangor sits,
All faults he pardons, though he none commits.’

Sir Godfrey Kneller was employed by Mr. Secretary Tonson to paint the portraits of the members of the club, each picture to be of a certain size, which admitted of the hands being seen, and which afterwards gave rise to what is now known in art circles as the Kit-cat portrait. Sir Godfrey was one of the vainest men living, and Tonson one of the shrewdest, who, when he was dying at the age of eighty, regretted that he could not commence his life over again, for he was sure he would then be able to amass one hundred thousand pounds, instead of the eighty thousand which he was worth at his death. By pandering to the artist’s inordinate love of vanity, Tonson got a great many pictures from him without cost, including two portraits of himself.

Sir Godfrey’s name was closely associated with the Kit-cat Club and many of its members,

and he was no less remarkable than many of them. His wit brightened up and thrust itself forward now and then, and showed that it could be just as keen as his vanity. Once, when Pope, in his usual satirical way, said, 'If Sir Godfrey had been consulted, the world would have been made more perfect,' Kneller looked down on the little poet, who acknowledged himself to be 'the least thing of a man in England,' and replied, with a smile, 'Fore God, there are some little things in it I think I could have mended better.'

The poet and painter were, however, good friends and neighbours, and Pope during Sir Godfrey's last days spent a great deal of his time with him. When he visited him on one occasion, he found the artist lying in bed contemplating with great satisfaction a plan which he had drawn for his monument. Pope said he never saw a scene of such human vanity in his life, and that Kneller 'said many gross things in relation to himself and the memory he should leave behind him,' which was the only thing that seemed to reconcile him to his death, which he regarded with fear. Pope strove to soothe

him by saying he had been a good man during his life, and no doubt he would go to a better place, when Kneller replied, 'Ah, my good friend Mr. Pope, I wish God would let me stay here.' Then he went on to tell his friend of a remarkable dream he had recently had.

'A night or two ago,' said Sir Godfrey, 'I dreamt that I was dead, and soon afterwards found myself walking between two hills, rising pretty equally on each side. Before me I saw a door, and a great number of people about it. I walked on towards them. As I drew nearer, I could distinguish St. Peter by his keys, with some other of the Apostles; they were admitting the people as they came next the door. When I had joined the company, I could see several seats every way at a little distance within the door. As the first after my coming up approached for admittance, St. Peter asked his name, and then his religion.

"I am a Roman Catholic," replied the spirit.

"Go in, then," says St. Peter, "and sit down on those seats there on the right hand."

'The next was a Presbyterian; he was ad-

mitted after the usual questions, and ordered to sit down on the seat opposite the other. My turn came next, and as I approached, St. Peter very civilly asked me my name. I said 'twas Kneller. I had no sooner said so than St. Luke (who was standing just by) turned towards me and said, with a great deal of earnestness,

“What! the famous Sir Godfrey Kneller from England?”

“The very same, sir, at your service,” says I.

“On this St. Luke immediately drew near to me, embraced me, and made me a great many compliments on the art both of us had followed in the world, and entered so far into the subject that he seemed almost to have forgot the business for which I came thither. At last, however, he recollected himself, and said,

“I beg your pardon, Sir Godfrey. I was so taken up with the pleasure of conversing with you! But, apropos, pray, sir, what religion may you be of?”

“Why, truly, sir,” says I, “I am of no religion.”

“Oh, sir,” says he, “you will be so good,

then, as to go in, and take your seat where you please.”

When he had finished the narration of this wonderful dream, he spoke of his approaching death, and told his friend he should not like to lie among the rascals at Westminster; that a memorial there would be sufficient, and desired him to write his epitaph, which Pope did, and afterwards declared: ‘I think it is the worst thing I ever did in my life.’

The Kit-cats did more to encourage art than employing Sir Godfrey’s brush. Once they offered the sum of four hundred guineas for the encouragement of good comedies, which, they held, taught good manners. During the summer months, when the town grew unbearably hot and dusty, the club adjourned its meetings to the ‘Upper Flask’ tavern by Hampstead Heath, where they enjoyed themselves with that zest for which they were famous. When Tonson went to live at Barn Elms, which had once been the residence of Cowley, the Kit-cats held their meetings there, and continued to do so until the days of this merry club

drew to an end towards the first year of George II.'s reign. By this time, most of its original members were scattered and gone. Good old Dr. Garth had been gathered to his forefathers; Congreve was an invalid who suffered agonies from gout; that warm-hearted Irishman, honest Dick Steele, had become a hopeless paralytic, helpless in body, depressed in spirits, a wreck of his former self; the sturdy old Duke of Marlborough had been resting for some years under a ton or two of white marble; Addison had gone where the Countess of Warwick could no longer disturb him, and Lord Mohun, whose entrance to the club had been regretted by Tonson, and who had killed Captain Coote, and aided in murdering Montford the actor, had been run through the body by the Duke of Hamilton, whom he succeeded in killing likewise.

It is almost melancholy to read a letter from the once brilliant Vanbrugh in 1727, in which he says to Tonson: 'Both Lords Carlisle and Cobham expressed a great desire of having one meeting next winter, not as a club, but as old

friends that have been of a club—and the best club that ever met.'

Swift, with the aid of some friends, established the October Club, which differed, politically, from the Kit-cat. Lords Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Bathurst were members of it, as was also Dr. Arbuthnot. Its meetings were held at the 'Bell Tavern' in King Street. Its tendencies were not merely political; they inclined largely towards literature, and at its meetings were frequently discussed the publications of satires and lampoons, which afterwards flooded the town.

The 'Mug-House' club held its meetings in Long Acre, where, on Wednesdays, 'a mixture of gentlemen, lawyers, and tradesmen meet in a great room. A grave old gentleman, in his grey hair, and nearly ninety years of age, is the president, and sits in an armed chair some steps higher than the rest. A harp plays all the while at the lower end of the room, and now and then some one of the company rises and entertains the rest with a song (and, by-the-by, some are good masters). Here is nothing drunk

but ale, and every gentleman chalks on the table as it is brought in; everyone also, as in coffee-houses, retires when he pleases.'

Another club was the Scribblers (or Scriblerus) that could boast of such members as Gay, Parnell, and Swift. At the various clubs Mr. Pope was a welcome guest when he came to town from his retreat, where he was translating 'Homer.' They were almost all political, and he kept clear of them, so that, whilst his friends busied themselves with the affairs of state, he was, he says, 'considering only how Menelaus may recover Helen, and the Trojan War be put to a speedy conclusion.' Such thoughts paid him better than politics, for the wise little gentleman received the sum of five thousand, three hundred, and twenty pounds, four shillings, for his translation. He had left town to avoid interruption during his work, and made his adieux in the lines commencing:—

'Dear, damn'd, distracting town, farewell,
Thy fools no more I'll tease.'

His farewell to his friends is set down in a racy style:

'Farewell, Arbuthnot's railleŕy' :
On every learned sot ;
And Garth, the best good Christian he,
Although he knows it not.

'Linton, farewell, thy bard must go,
Farewell, unhappy Tonson!
Heaven gives thee for thy loss of Rowe
Lean Phillip and fat Johnson.

'Why should I stay ? Both parties rage,
My vixen mistress squalls ;
The wits in envious feuds engage,
And Homer (damn him) calls.

'Delicious lobster nights, farewell,
For sober, studious days !
And Burlington's delicious meal,
For salads, tarts, and pease.'

In 1718 the poet left town, after this farewell, and settled down on the border of the Thames, in the district of Richmond and Twickenham, where, as he says, 'I passed an entire year of my life without any fixed abode in London, or more than a transitory glance, for a day or two at most in a month, on the pomps of the town.' On the occasions of such visits the poet, like many another child of the Muses before and since, caroused and drank more wine than was good for him. In a letter which he wrote to

Congreve he says, 'I sit up till two o'clock over Burgundy and Champagne, and am become so much a rake that I shall be ashamed in a short time to be thought to do any sort of business. I fear I must get the gout by drinking; purely for a fashionable pretence to sit still long enough to translate four books of Homer. I hope you will by that time be up again, and I may succeed to the bed and couch of my predecessor; pray cause the stuffing to be repaired and the crutches to be shortened for me.'

In the early years of the reign of George I. the city was wretchedly lighted. There were no glass lamps in the streets, but all householders whose dwellings faced a street, lane, or public passage were obliged to suspend a lantern from the doors of their houses from six to eleven o'clock, unless on such nights when the moon was full and did her duty, as every moon was expected to do by those who lit the thoroughfares under the penalty of a shilling fine. Such an advantage to thieves did this semi-light afford that the town was unsafe after dark, and the most impudent robberies were continually committed. It was no uncommon

occurrence for these thieves to quietly and with dexterous stealthiness cut open the back of a hackney-coach as it drove along at night, and then make a sudden grab at the valuable wig of the male occupant, or the head-dress of the female, generally ornamented with jewels. Pursuit down the dark and narrow by-streets would prove useless, and probably dangerous.

Those who were obliged to go out usually carried lanterns with them, but they were suddenly wrenched from them when an attempt at robbery was made, and their crying out for help often ended in murder. Nothing, indeed, could be more daring than the conduct of the foot-pads who infested both the town and suburbs; and their hardiness is only a little more astonishing than the leniency with which they were treated. One instance of this is given in an account of a felony contained in the *Weekly Journal* for August 17, 1723, at which one can scarcely help feeling amused.

‘A highwayman robbed a single gentleman at Newmarket t’other day, and, taking a watch from him that he had set an extra value on, he entreated the gentleman that had made so free

with him to let him redeem it at any price he should be pleased to put upon it, and to appoint a time and place for yielding up the ransom and paying the money. "You are upon honour, I hope," says the thief. "Yes, by my soul," says the gentleman. "Why, then," says the robber, "if you are acquainted with anybody hereabouts, I'll go with you now, and you shall have the watch again for two guineas." So the gentleman named a house in Newmarket; but the other desired to be excused waiting on him thither, because it lay a little way out of his business. "Why, then, we'll go to Bourne Bridge," says the gentleman again. "With all my heart," says the other. So away they rode together, and in their way met a nobleman's coach, with a great retinue, which they passed by without taking any notice, and at length came to the house at Bourne Bridge, where the gentleman borrowed some money, paid down two guineas, and had his watch returned, and, after the drinking of a bottle of wine, with mutual civilities they took leave of each other.'

Another paper gives an account of an outrage by a gallant Hibernian captain, Fitzgerald by

name, who one summer night lay in wait until the lady of his love was returning in her chair through the Strand from St. James's. Having stopped the sedan, the Captain parleyed with the fair one, but she refused to accompany him or move from the chair; whereon the Captain sought to force her, when the lady was defended by her carriers. Fitzgerald, however, had three friends in waiting for him, who immediately advanced, and, after beating the carriers, commenced to cut open the sedan with their swords. The noise attracted a watchman, who was advancing with his stave when he was dexterously pierced in the back by one of the gallants, and left for dead on the footway. This attracted a crowd, when the Captain was arrested, his friends having made good their escape.

Such occurrences as these were frequent, yet it was not until the end of this reign that an application was made to Parliament by the Lord Mayor and Common Council to enable them to light the streets in a proper manner by the erection of a sufficient number of glass lamps for the purpose, to be kept burning from the setting to the rising of the sun.

A few advertisements taken at random from the press of the period will perhaps best help to illustrate the ways of the town.

‘Any agreeable persons of either sex who are willing to live all the year within an hour’s walk of London, if they send their names and places of abode to Mr. William Tomlison, at Frank’s coffee-house in Mitre Lane, Fleet Street, they shall be received into a very delightful dwelling, without even paying any rent for their apartments, or being obliged to any further expense than only to bear an equal share with others for the dinner that will be daily provided for them at the house. This generous invitation is given to bring together a company of persons who love retirement and harmony.’

‘Matthew Roebuck, footman, born near Wakefield in Yorkshire, in a dark grey coat with black sleeves, talks Yorkshire, age about twenty-one years, a middle size, dark brown hair, grey eyes, a fresh complexion, with a down walk, did early on Wednesday morning last steal from Mrs. Asheton in Covent Garden a candlestick, snuffers, and stand of silver, with a coat-of-arms of a mullet, and three leopards’ heads, and a

crest of a boar's head, a man's suit of light sagathy, a silver-laced hat, shirt, cravat, with other plate and things. Whoever secures him shall have twenty shillings, or for the things forty shillings or proportionable for any part; paid by Mr. Jarnegan, goldsmith in Covent Garden.'

'Whereas Elizabeth, the wife of Richard Littleton, of the parish of St. Botolph, Bishops-gate, did on Saturday the 4th inst., between the hours of five and six in the evening, elope from her said husband, carrying with her two bundles of wearing clothes and other things. This is to desire all persons not to trust the said Elizabeth with money or goods, on account of her said husband, for that he will not pay any debts she shall contract after the publication hereof. N.B.—The said Elizabeth is a short woman, her face somewhat thin, fresh-coloured, and much freckled in the face and neck, dark eyes, eyebrows, and dark hair. She lately lived with the Hon. Gilbert Vane as nurse; she went away in a printed calico gown and petticoat with a suit of aced pinnars on.'

'A young gentlewoman, very light brown

hair, fair complexion, middle stature, a large pit or mark of a small-pock near the corner of one of her eyes, and some few pits on her nose, about the age of seventeen years, in a scarlet camolet cloak, was about eleven o'clock before noon on Wednesday, the 3rd inst. (August, 1718) carried in a hackney-coach to the house of Sir Alexander Cairnes, Bart., on College Hill, and thence carried to Mr. Colebrook, a banker in Threadneedle Street, the back of the Royal Exchange, London, where she received a good sum of money, and was thence carried away in the same coach, but has not been since heard of by the family to whom she belongs, her name being at present concealed, in hopes she or any person concerned in conveying her away will let some of her relations know she is alive; or if the said coachman who drove the said coach will give an account of what place he parted with her, or if any other stage or country coachman or other person will give an account to Mrs. Parker, who keeps the coffee-house formerly called "Young Man's Coffee House," near Charing Cross, where the said gentleman may be heard of, such persons giving the said account shall

be well rewarded, and have their charges paid them by the said Mrs. Parker, or the said Sir Alexander Cairnes.'

During this reign London had become the very centre of dissipation. The nobility, with scarce an exception, were thoroughly profligate. The king's immoral conduct was not lost to the court, from whence the evil oozed out amongst those in the lesser ranks of society, and in turn descended to the lowest. Religion, partly from a re-action of that religious strife which existed under Queen Anne, had now become a name to the higher classes, and could exercise no purifying restraints. Scepticism and infidelity crept into the court under the shelter of Mary Lapell's accomplishments, Lord Hervey's wit, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's advanced opinions. The vice of drunkenness was widely practised, and its effects were occasionally to be seen even in the royal drawing-room, as when Mr. George Mayo was turned out for being saucy and pulling Sir James Baker by the nose. The clergy, with few exceptions, were men whose characters disgraced their calling. The bishops who were appointed to sees under the reign of

George I. had chiefly bought their advancements from their sovereign's mistresses, and those in the lower ranks of the Church Militant lived in a free-and-easy style, which in those days was looked on with an indulgent smile instead of with censure.

The stage, always a mirror of the times, had become abominably coarse and licentious. Infidelity to the marriage vow was the general subject of the drama, virtue was ridiculed, honour sneered at, yet the theatre continually received royal patronage. Once the Duchess of Roxburgh told the Princess of Wales that 'The Amorous Widow; or, The Wanton,' then a great favourite with the town, and often 'bespoke' by persons of quality, which Her Royal Highness purposed seeing, had not a good reputation. The Princess said she would venture to see it, and after returning from the play-house declared she liked it as well as any play she had seen, and that it was 'not more indecent than all comedies are.'

When the Prince visited the play-house, the broader and more immoral the comedy was, the louder and longer he laughed, his mirth often-

times continuing when even that of the lackeys in the gallery had subsided, so that the house frequently beheld the spectacle of the Prince in the royal box clapping his fat hands and shaking his fat sides over some *double entendre*. He made no hesitation in displaying his taste in this direction. On one occasion, when 'Venice Preserved' was about to be put on the stage, he ordered that certain scenes which had long been exorcised should be fully restored, a command obeyed to his no small delight.

To such an extent, indeed, did vice obtain, that in 1721 Lord Nottingham rose in the House of Lords to complain of the profanity and blasphemy of the nation, and lent his aid towards introducing a bill for the suppression of evil. Many of the lords spiritual and temporal approved of the motion, and one of the former declared he believed the calamities occasioned by the South Sea Bubble were brought on by the crimes of the people. 'If so,' replied Lord Onslow, gravely, 'your lordship must be a very wicked sinner, for I hear you have lost considerably by the South Sea scheme.'

CHAPTER XI.

The King's last Mistress—Miss Brett's Parents—The King's Departure—His Superstition—Curious Prophecy regarding his Death—Miss Brett gives a sample of her Authority—The King's Death—The Duchess of Kendal—Stories circulated after the King's Death—The King's Reign a Proem to the History of England under the House of Brunswick—His Character—Story of him told by his Turkish Valet—His sympathy with those imprisoned for Debt—George I. as a Husband, Father, King, and Man.

IN November, 1726, Sophia Dorothea died, and a few months after that event His Sacred Majesty, then approaching his sixty-seventh year, became enamoured of a young English lady, whom he had little trouble in persuading to become his mistress. This was Anne Brett, whose mother was a notorious woman—none other, indeed, than the repudiated wife of the Earl of Macclesfield, and most un-

natural mother of the poet, Richard Savage. The new favourite's father, Colonel Brett, was one of the handsomest and most licentious men of the day.

The union of these parents came about in a strange manner, but one eminently characteristic of them, as well as of the times. Hearing a disturbance in the street in front of her house one day, the divorced countess looked out to ascertain the cause, and saw the modern Adonis, Colonel Brett, being assaulted by bailiffs, who claimed his handsome person by way of set-off against his equally handsome debts. Seeing his difficulties, she immediately sent out to his debtors, promising to pay their demands, and, when the Colonel was released, she proposed to him that he should marry her, to which he, nothing loath, consented. The offspring of this union became mistress of a king.

Miss Brett was extremely high-spirited, haughty, and handsome; moreover, she had great faith in the power of her charms, and had some influence over His Majesty; one proof of which was, that she extracted a promise from him to make her a countess, and,

doubtless, he would have kept his word, but that death put a stop to his intentions.

In May, 1720, His Majesty began to yearn for another sight of what was to him the land of the blest—Hanover. He had gone backwards and forwards continually during his reign, but this visit was destined to be his last. So he set out from England, promising Miss Brett to make her a peeress when he returned; and took leave of the Prince and Princess of Wales, —whom he hated as much as ever—with tears rolling down his cheeks.

The tears were not tributes of regret at parting with them, but were shed because he was certain, as he said, that he should never come back again. All his life he had been superstitious, and he now placed implicit faith in a prophetic warning he had received, that he should not survive his wife by a year. Horace Walpole is of opinion that the prophecy was probably dictated by the Duke and Duchess of Zell, ‘who might be apprehensive lest the Duchess of Kendal should be tempted to remove entirely the obstacle to her conscientious union with their son-in-law.’ This fear of the

king's accounted for the solicitude regarding her health which he showed during the last years of her life, when he had frequently sent to make inquiries concerning her. Singularly enough, the prophecy came true.

But Mistress Anne Brett anticipated no such sudden downfall to her ambitions. She was installed in St. James's Palace, where she was to remain during the king's absence until he returned to make her a countess. Meanwhile, she resolved to give the court a specimen of what her power might be able to accomplish in the future, by ordering a door to be broken out of her apartment into the royal garden. Three of the Princesses lived in the palace since the royal quarrel; and the Princess Royal, resenting the liberty taken by Mistress Brett, immediately gave orders to have the door blocked up again; on which the king's favourite ordered it to be knocked down. At this the Princess waxed wrathful indeed. Of all the younger branches of the family, she was the most haughty and ambitious, and these feelings she never sought to disguise. Once she said to her mother, she wished she had no brothers, in order that she

might succeed to the throne; and, on being reproached for expressing this desire, she made answer, 'I would die to-morrow to be queen to-day.'

Having such a spirit, Mistress Brett had an opponent to deal with more resolute and imperious than she had reckoned. Once more she gave peremptory orders to have the wall built up, and no doubt there would have been a pretty quarrel, but that news of the king's death came, and Mistress Brett quickly left St. James's, a disappointed woman. She was never destined to see her ambition of becoming a peeress fulfilled, but was quite satisfied, some years after, to marry Sir William Leman.

Late on the night of Friday the 9th of June the king arrived at Dalden. He was apparently well, but little fatigued, and made a hearty supper, which was the cause of his death. Etough, writing to Dr. Birch a few years after, said: 'The king's make and constitution promised one hundred years; but this was hurt (I heard) by eating sturgeon and other strong foods in great quantities at the late hours of supper.' In the morning the king was up betimes, and

anxious to get to his journey's end with all possible speed. On his way, however, he was taken ill with violent pains, which were succeeded by a lethargic state. He was supported by one of his gentlemen-in-waiting, who rode with him in the carriage; his hands fell down useless to his sides, his tongue hung out, and he muttered occasionally, 'Osnaburg, Osnaburg.'

This led his attendants to believe that he wished to make 'no stay at Ippenburen, through which they passed, and they therefore drove in haste to the city whose name he muttered again and again. When they arrived at Osnaburg at last, and reached the residence of His Majesty's brother, the king was lifted from the carriage, and instantly bled; but he never recovered consciousness, and died a few hours afterwards, on the 11th of June, 1727.

When his illness first became apparent, a messenger was sent with word of his condition to the Duchess of Kendal, who had as usual accompanied the king on his journey from England, but was then staying at Dalden. The Duchess immediately set out for Osnaburg, but was met on the road by another courier,

who announced His Majesty's death ; on which, according to Archdeacon Coxe, she beat her breast, tore her hair, gave signs of great grief, and, dismissing the English ladies who accompanied her, went to Brunswick, where she remained three months.

Of course there were many stories told concerning the king's death that speedily gained wide circulation, one of which was that in her last days Sophia Dorothea wrote him a letter, upbraiding him for the years of persecution she had suffered, declaring her innocence, and finally calling on him to appear at the great Judgment seat on a day which she named. This letter she entrusted to the care of a faithful servitor, with instructions to keep it until such time as the king made his next journey to Hanover, when it was to be presented to him in person. This epistle Lockhart, who tells the story, says was frequently shown him by Count Welling, Governor of Luxemburg. The man whom Sophia Dorothea entrusted with it did as she desired him, and handed the missive to the king as he drove away from Dalden, when His

Majesty, after reading it, was immediately seized with his last illness. Horace Walpole tells a story which is probably truer. The king, he says, in a moment of more than usual tenderness, promised the Duchess of Kendal that if she survived him, and if it were possible for him to return, he would pay her a visit. When he had departed from this vale of tears, the Duchess, who was no less superstitious than her late royal master had been, looked forward to His Majesty's keeping his word, which she believed was fulfilled when one day a bird flew into her room; she received it with great respect and tenderness, 'and kept it till the royal bird or she took their last flight.' After three months spent in Brunswick, she had returned to England, and for many years lived at Kendal House, Twickenham. She had accumulated an immense sum of money, a portion of which her daughter, the Countess of Chesterfield, inherited, but the bulk of which went to her German relatives.

It has been said that George I.'s reign was little more than 'a proem to the history of England under the House of Brunswick.' Cer-

tain it is that as a king he exercised but little influence over the country. He had said to his ministers when he first came to England, 'I will do as you advise, and thus you will become entirely answerable for everything I do.' Sir Robert Walpole, who served him faithfully, and saved him from plunging the country into the troubles of war when His Majesty made some effort at managing it, said he had but two drawbacks, Hanover and German avarice.

Any ambitions he possessed were for his Electorate. So long as he was let have as much money as he wished for himself and his favourites he was satisfied, and conducted himself as a tranquil though selfish and gross old man. At times he showed that he was not without good nature. Mahomet, his Turkish valet, once entertained some ladies of the court by telling them of the king's grief at Hanover, when his sister, the Queen of Prussia, died. It was suspected that her death had been caused by having diamond dust administered to her, which slowly poisoned her. When her stomach was opened, Mahomet declared it was so worn that he could and did run his finger through it;

and, after detailing these interesting and delicate particulars, the Turk went on to say His Majesty's grief was so intense that he spent five days without eating or drinking, which surely must have been an exaggeration of the valet's, and that His Majesty kept walking up and down his room crying all the while, and hitting his toes against the wall, as was his habit when agitated or angry, until, his shoes being worn out, his toes protruded two inches at the foot. He had refused to see anyone, but Mahomet, knowing what was good for him, brought in his brother, the Bishop, when he flung his arms round his neck and cried out, 'Est-il possible, mon frère, que cette charmante femme nous puisse quitter en si peu de temps?' Then he went to bed, and soothed his grief.

He showed that he had a great sympathy with prisoners confined for debt. On the occasion of his first visit to the Mansion House he gave a £1,000 towards having such prisoners liberated, and during his reign gave smaller sums for the same purpose. His private life was, however, one of glaring immorality; as a husband he was faithless, cruel, and vindictive;

as a father his actions were unnatural; as a king he was despicable; and as a man he scarcely presented throughout his days one redeeming virtue to a life of gross sensuality.

CHAPTER XII.

The King is Dead: God Save the King—Sir Spencer Compton—Walpole's Diplomacy—The Court at Leicester House—The Queen's favour to Walpole—Lady Walpole at Court—His Majesty's Subtlety—The Civil List fixed—'Bustle of the Bees.'

THE tidings of the late king's death were sent from Hanover by Lord Townshend, who had accompanied him on his journey, to Sir Robert Walpole, who received them whilst he was quietly eating his dinner in his villa at Chelsea. The Prime Minister, with all possible speed, rode to Richmond, where the Prince and Princess were then staying, in order to communicate to them the surprising intelligence he had received, feeling doubtful as to the reception he would receive at the future king's hands.

During the quarrels between his late Majesty and his heir, Walpole was supposed to have sided with the former, and, though he strove to reconcile both, the Prince derived so little advantage from the terms of peace that he owed the minister no gratitude for any part he had taken in framing them. Moreover, he had a lurking distrust of Walpole, on whom he was wont to bestow the epithets of rogue and rascal with great frequency and no reserve.

From 'The Minutes of a Conversation with Mr. Scrope (Secretary to the Treasury) relating to the arrangements of the new Ministry on the accession of George II.,' preserved in the Etough papers, we learn that when Sir Robert arrived at Richmond he found George Augustus indulging in an afternoon nap, as was customary with the Prince and Princess. Impatient of delay when such news was to be broken to them, Walpole desired the lady-in-waiting, the Duchess of Dorset, to wake them from their dreams, when the Prince 'came out in a great hurry, with his breeches in his hand'; from which it is plain to be seen that Fate had never intended the royal father or son to hear

the tidings of their succession to the throne with what chroniclers would call 'becoming dignity.'

When His Majesty came out of his bed-room, Walpole went down on one knee, and, kissing the royal hand yet holding his nether garment, hailed the stout little man as king. The monarch at first declined to believe the tidings until the despatch announcing it was shown him, for he had no expectations that the days of his reign were so near at hand. When he had recovered somewhat from his surprise, Sir Robert asked him whom he would graciously appoint to draw up the declaration to the Privy Council, and was answered, briefly, 'Go to Chiswick and take your directions from Sir Spencer Compton.' That sentence was sufficient to show Walpole that the king intended he should no longer hold his post as first minister, and that a change of ministry was imminent.

Sir Spencer Compton, who had been Treasurer to the Prince of Wales since his arrival in England, was a man eminently unsuited for the office of Prime Minister; though he had been Speaker to three parliaments, and held the post of Pay-

master, he was considered dull, irresolute, and devoid of talent. No one was perhaps better aware of his inability than Sir Robert Walpole, and, quick-witted and clever as he was, he resolved to use Sir Spencer's weakness for his own advantage. Going to him at once he gave him the royal message, and assured him that, as he had been the Prince's Treasurer, it was most natural that he should now become the king's, when his master ascended the throne; that he and the rest of the world had but expected the favour to which his services entitled him, and which his abilities would enable him to support.

With that cultured adroitness which is begotten of courts he continued, 'My time has been, yours is beginning; but as we must all depend in some degree upon our successors, and that it is always prudent for these successors by way of example to have some regard for their predecessors, that with the measure they mete it may be measured to them again,—for this reason I put myself under your protection, and for this reason I expect you will give it. I desire no share of power or business; one of your white sticks, or any employment of that sort, is all I

ask as a mark from the crown that I am not abandoned to the enmity of those whose envy is the only source of their hate, and who consequently will wish you no better than they have done me the moment you are visited with those honours and that authority, the possession of which they will always covet, and the power of which of course they will always hate.' Having left an excellent impression on his successor's mind, Sir Robert departed.

Next day the Prince was proclaimed king, and their Majesties came to Leicester House, where courtiers and politicians crowded the rooms by day and night, anxious to kiss hands and gain favourable notice by the ardour of their congratulations. Those who were out of town at the time came back in all haste; all day long Leicester Square was thronged with coaches and sedan chairs, with groups of soldiers and statesmen, idlers, footmen and chairmen, all more or less busy with speculations, and all, from the highest to the lowest, expecting to receive some benefit from the change which had happened. The late king was almost as readily forgotten as if he had never sat on the

British throne, while his son was hailed as one born to achieve greatness.

During the four days that he remained in town this state of things continued, but towards two men amongst the crowd popular feeling had changed. These were Sir Robert Walpole, who rumour declared had fallen from his high estate, and Sir Spencer Compton who was looked on as the Prime Minister of the future government. Those who had followed, flattered, and pleaded to Walpole but a little while ago now shunned or ignored him in the presence of royalty wherever he went; in the drawing-room he found a wide space was left for him, and, save by one or two of his old colleagues, he was deserted; whilst on the other hand, Sir Spencer Compton, wherever he moved, was surrounded by a crowd of eager courtiers and statesmen anxious to obtain his favour.

Amongst the most eager of those was Bubb Doddington, one of the Lords of the Treasury, who now courted the new minister, though but a while before he had declared in some lines addressed to Walpole that he

‘To share thy adverse fate alone pretend,
In power a servant, out of power a friend.’

The same conduct pursued at court by the time-servers was likewise carried on at the private residences of the statesmen whose names were now before the public. St. James’s Square, where Spencer Compton lived, was crowded with the coaches of those anxious to pay court to him, whilst Walpole’s house was deserted.

Meanwhile the new minister set about making a draft of the king’s speech, but, finding himself unequal to the task, asked Walpole as a favour to assist him. This he did readily, and when it was finished Compton copied it out in his own hand, and took it to the king. After a while Sir Robert, who was determined not to let himself be forgotten, likewise took his way to Leicester House, where he found his successor in a state of confusion, from the fact that the king had objected to one passage in his speech which he found himself unable to correct. In his dilemma he asked Walpole to persuade the king to let the sentence stand. Sir Robert seized on this chance of testing his power, took an op-

portunity of seeing His Majesty alone, and soon brought him round to think as he did of the passage objected to, when it was allowed to stand.

This fact coming to the queen's knowledge, she, with her woman's wit, immediately suspected who had originally made out the draft, and pointed out to the king the imprudence of appointing as first minister a man so incapable of writing out a speech that he had to apply to his predecessor for the purpose. Probably His Majesty began to see that he had made a mistake in hastily dismissing a minister who had governed the country so fairly during the late reign. However, he bided his time a little longer before making any change, until a question of great moment to him—the settlement of the Civil List—was regulated in Parliament. Meanwhile Sir Robert and his colleagues were in suspense.

A slight incident occurred at this time which showed the point in which the royal favour was beginning to blow. The queen privately took Sir Robert Walpole's part, and was anxious to destroy all hopes of change in the minds of the

courtiers, and express her own sentiments at the same time. One day, when Lady Walpole sought to pay her homage to the new court, she had great difficulty in pushing her way through the crowd lately so subservient to her, but which now turned its back on her and made impassable barriers with its elbows, so that she could not get nearer to the queen than within three or four rows. Her Majesty, however, caught sight of her, and taking in her position at a glance, called out, 'There I'm sure I see a friend.' Immediately the courtiers parted on either side to permit Lady Walpole's approach, 'and,' the minister's wife used to say afterwards, 'As I came away I might have walked over their heads if I had pleased.'

When Parliament opened, the first thing to be decided was the Civil List; and, when that was settled, the old Parliament was to be dissolved and a new one elected. Regarding the Civil List, a question which so nearly touched his pocket, the king proved himself a wily man, who had his royal eyes opened to the personal importance of the situation. The members of the old Parliament, who from the short delay in

its dissolution had begun to entertain some hope of its continuance, as well as those who believed themselves destined for office in the new, were equally anxious to meet the king's views with regard to the sum he should enjoy. His Majesty, who was therefore master of the situation, was clever enough to avoid giving signs of favour to either party. The late king had received a pension of £700,000, and the Prince of Wales £100,000; but, avaricious as the former had been, his son had the same vice developed to a greater degree, and nothing less than these united sums would satisfy his greed.

He knew Walpole to be a clever minister, who had great influence in the Commons, and was anxious to secure his services for the passing of the Civil List Revenue. With a subtleness which could scarcely be expected from His Majesty, he strove to accomplish this end. Taking Walpole by the hand one day, he said, 'Consider, Sir Robert, what makes me easy in this matter' (*i.e.*, the Civil List), 'will prove for your ease too. It is for my life it is to be fixed, and it is for your life.' At the time when he was so anxious about his future income, it is

worth while noting that he was worth three hundred thousand pounds, and his revenues from Hanover exceeded five hundred thousand a year.

The queen, likewise, had great confidence in Walpole's power. Once, according to Archdeacon Coxe, when she was having a comfortable chat at chapel with the late king, as was their wont, she had told him that, for want of funds, he would be obliged to disband his Hanoverian troops, when His Majesty made answer, 'No, no, for Walpole can convert stones into gold.' This estimate of the minister's power from one who had such experience of it, appropriately occurred to her, and strengthened her and her husband in their good opinion of Sir Robert.

When the time came, he fixed the Civil List at eight hundred thousand pounds, out of which the king was to provide for the Prince of Wales, thus giving him a revenue greater than that previously enjoyed by any English king. This grant met with but one dissenting voice in the House of Commons, that of William Shippen, the same who had been sent to the Tower in 1717 for declaring that the king 'was a stranger

to our language and constitution,' and whom Pope calls, 'Downright Shippen.' He was a thorough Jacobite, and Walpole said he was the only commoner in Parliament whose price he did not know. Shippen, in turn, said of Walpole, 'Robin and I are two honest men; he is for King George, and I am for King James; but those men with long cravats only desire place, either under King George or King James.'

However, the enthusiastic generosity of the nation, as represented by Parliament on this occasion, did not end here. It was thought a proper time to have Her Majesty's jointure settled. The sum finally fixed on was £100,000 a year, exactly double that of any previous Queen of England; moreover, Somerset House and Richmond Lodge were thrown into the bargain. This last item was principally due to Walpole, and at once settled him in the king's favour, and in more than his old power. The Whig ministry was retained, with Walpole as first minister, and, to satisfy Sir Spencer Compton for any disappointment he might feel, he was sent to the Upper House as Baron Wilmington,

where he was safely beyond the reach of being made troublesome by any of Walpole's dissatisfied opponents.

Pope, in writing of this stirring time to Mr. Bethel, says, 'It put the whole world into a new state. The only use I have, shall, or wish to make of it,' continues the little gentleman, 'is to observe the disparity of men from themselves in a week's time: the desultory leaping and catching of new motions, new modes, new measures, and that strange spirit of life with which men, broken and disappointed, resume their hopes, their solicitations, their ambitions! It would be worth your while, as a philosopher, to be busy in these observations, and to come hither to see the fury and bustle of the bees in this hot season, without coming so near as to be stung by them!'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.







